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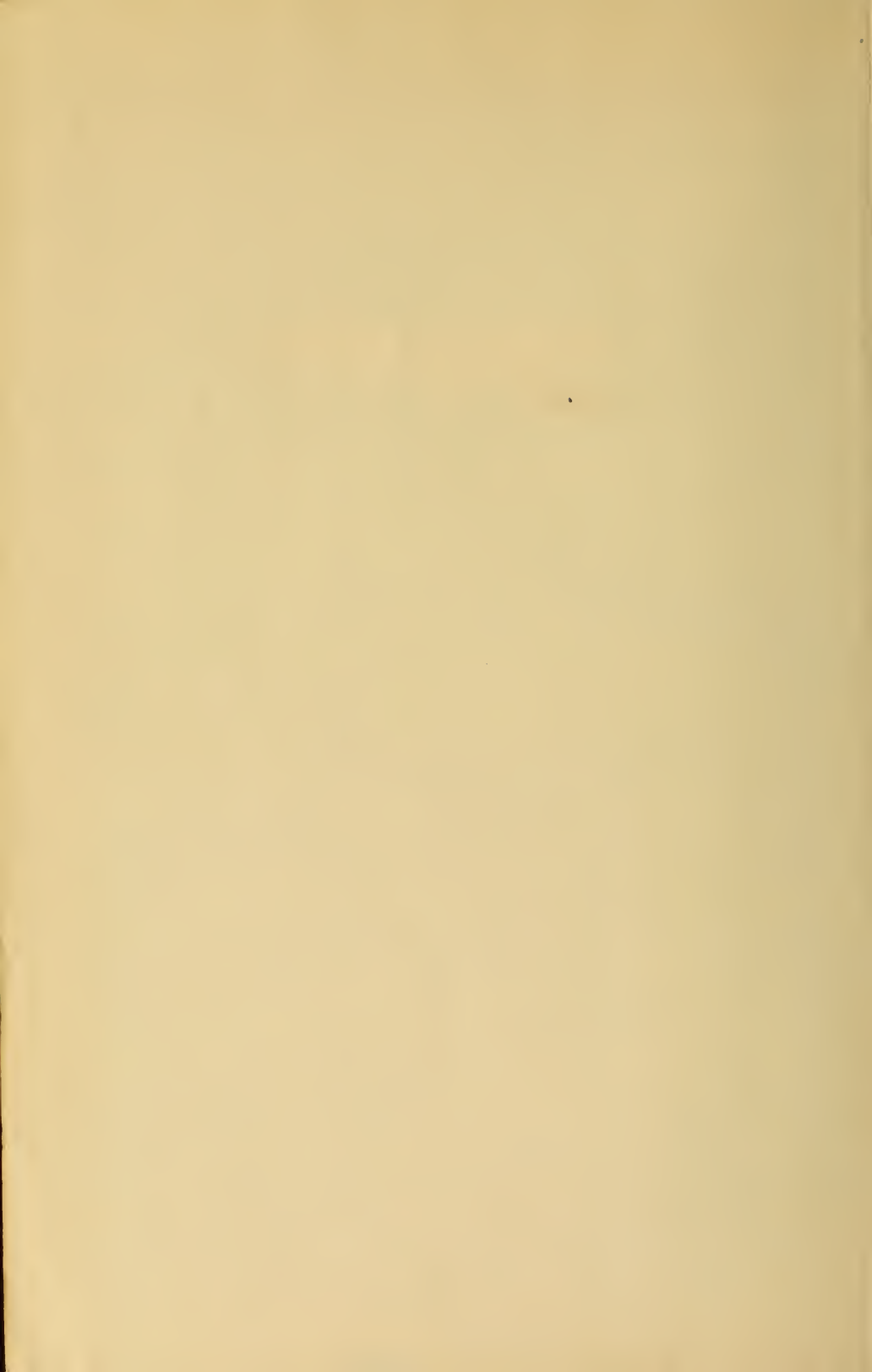
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DRAMA
ON THE AIR

DRAMA ON THE AIR



David R. Mackey • THE DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH
THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE COLLEGE



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TO

ELEANOR—

who helped the most

Preface

RADIO ACTORS, directors, and playwrights have a lot in common. This book attempts to explore their common lot.

It will be apparent to the reader that primary emphasis has been placed on problems of radio acting and production, particularly the former, but as a whole the book attempts to correlate the activities of these somewhat separate arts, rather than to separate them still farther. Specialization is a most efficient and necessary method for furthering an art, a science, and a business. But it is efficient only when the specialist can relate his own work to that of other specialists whose achievements spring from roots common to all. I have tried therefore to integrate the three major facets of radio drama into a unified whole, and to proceed from there into an examination of the problems facing the actor and director.

The organizational difficulties caused by the interdependence of the topics discussed have, to a large degree, been overcome by allowing the main body of the text to follow a time sequence: from consideration of the script to the final performance on the air.

Within this organizational framework, I have tried to emphasize that the professional radio player should be as well versed in the foundations of his art and craft as are his contemporaries in the theatre. In addition, it should be realized that in radio drama is incorporated a body of specific content integrated on the one hand with the dramatic arts and on the other with the practicalities of radio as a business. I have tried, therefore, to relate radio drama to

the industry in a practical way, but without subordinating those important facets that make it an artistic discipline.

I have attempted to show that professional attitude, strong background, and knowledge of and ability to use certain techniques will result in richer personal satisfaction to the player and director and better fare for the listener. In the best of professional tradition, the reader is given background, means and method, and materials and application. In this book I have tried to combine the theory necessary for complete understanding of the radio play as a dramatic form with the tools and techniques that make it possible to translate the radio play into living drama.

In attempting to write a definitive text, I have incurred obligations that I can only acknowledge, never repay. To my former colleague, Dr. William Peery, of the Department of English of the University of Texas, I am extremely indebted for criticism of portions of the first draft of Section One, and for many helpful suggestions on style and content of the book as a whole. I am also indebted for suggestions made by Dr. Albert Johnson, of the Department of Drama, and Mr. Thomas D. Rishworth, of Radio House, the University of Texas.

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writing of this section. The interpretative aspects covering the uses of microphones, and their advantages and limitations, are, however, my own.

It would have been impossible to write a book of this nature without the generous assistance of other authors and playwrights, and their agents and publishers. For allowing me to use their plays, I am indebted to Lucille Fletcher, Martin Maloney, Bill Sweeney, and Joseph Ruscoll. For permission to use excerpts from their plays and works special thanks are extended to the playwrights, authors, and adaptors, and their agents, executors, and publishers, whose contributions to this book are acknowledged on pages xi-xiv.

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JUNE, 1951

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SECTION ONE

RADIO DRAMA



CHAPTER

1

Introduction

RADIO IS THE heterogeneous product of advertisers, artists, educators, engineers, broadcasters, and listeners. It is different things to different people. It is an industry and an art, a medium of information and a medium of advertising, a source of entertainment and a source of education.

In all of radio's many and varied facets, drama plays an important role. It is with this aspect of radio that this book is concerned. More specifically, the purpose of this book is to describe the concepts and activities basic to the presentation of drama on the air, in the areas of script, acting, and production.

Radio drama is not an isolated segment of broadcasting. It is integrated with the other aspects of the industry—sales, public service, education, promotion, listener relationship and good will, management, script, and so on. Even though he is obviously specializing in one area, the radio artist should be on speaking terms with the other professional workers in the industry. Their interests and pursuits should be his concern. He cannot divorce himself from the actual conditions existing in the field, for as the wheel turns, so does the cog revolve.

The student of radio drama in any of its phases should, first of all, know something of the medium in which he is working.

Radio is a composite of industrial, artistic, and sociological forces. It can best be defined and comprehended as the sum of many groups and ideologies working within the framework of the medium. When,

therefore, a person speaks of "Radio," he is generally speaking from a particular point of view, rather than of the medium as a whole. Thus when an agency man says, "Radio is wonderful," he probably means that his particular program is acting as a profitable salesman for certain merchandise or services. A critic or listener who says, "Radio stinks!" is likely to mean that there are not enough programs suited to his particular taste broadcast at times convenient to his listening schedule.

Of course, these distinctions are elementary. Everyone knows that there are different levels of broadcasting, but they must be emphasized and kept in mind, because many persons tend to regard and evaluate the medium as if it were one immutable and insensitive object, rather than something which is a variegated patchwork of advertisers, broadcasters, educators, governing boards, and listeners, each of which is operating on many levels.

The first thing that we must agree upon, therefore, is that radio can be, and often is, made up of dissimilar elements which frequently work at cross purposes with each other. If this is agreed upon, there is no discrepancy in the fact that radio is a salesman as well as an educator. It is both an industry and an art. It may be thought of as an instrument of mass information or an instrument for mass entertainment. For radio is all of these—and more. It is show business, educational business, and just plain business.

First and foremost, however, radio in the United States is, more often than not, a medium of advertising. Most radio drama is designed to get the listener in the mood to buy the goods or services which are offered for sale by the sponsor. The sponsor has a right to expect that there will be a return on his investment in time and talent, either in actual sales or increased prestige. This being the case, it is only natural that the sponsor be interested in reaching and pleasing as many people as he can.

It is this effort that has been responsible for a goodly portion of the criticism aimed at American radio. In their eternal quest for more and more listeners, (ergo, buyers), sponsors and broadcasters, despite their attempts to get new program ideas, have often been guilty of using the same idea over and over again. A successful

program idea is immediately copied, on the theory that if a little is good, a lot is better. There are so many "private eyes" on the air that it is a wonder that any crooks are left. Family groups "just like the folks who live down your block" are a dime-a-dozen. Squeaky-voiced adolescents multiply rapidly when one of their number cracks the top ratings; motherly characters who look after the trials and tribulations of their little groups spring up spontaneously, and so on, ad infinitum, ad nauseam.

A second and most important point about the medium is concerned with its approach to the audience. It is a truism that radio is a mass medium. Inasmuch as popular art appeals to most people, it is the predominant type on the airwaves. This fact must be clearly understood, and the radio worker who with sincerity approaches his opportunity to make a contribution to that popular art is the one who will contribute most and who will make an imprint upon our society. For popular art, including popular drama, cannot be dismissed. As Lyman Bryson puts it:

It is not possible to get rid of the problem of popular art by concluding that whatever has neither the beauty of fine art, nor the dignity and human meaning of folk art, has therefore no value at all. Nor can we escape the problem by saying that popular art is important only in so far as it contains, even by accident, the elements of beauty. The fact remains that great numbers of people in our culture spend hours of their time in consuming these delights. If it is not a question of esthetics it is still sociology and (here Plato's ghost rears his head) it may be morals.¹

Probably the factor that is most discouraging to radio's dramatic workers is the transientness of their products. It is difficult, even under the best of conditions, to take pride in work which is as evanescent as a snowflake in the Sahara. The pride of accomplishment which comes with the permanence of the written word or the film is almost completely lacking in radio. Scripts, once produced, are buried beneath an ever-increasing pile of "something new and different." Transcriptions are made of many shows, but outside of

¹ Lyman Bryson, "Popular Art," in *The Communication of Ideas: A Series of Addresses*. Lyman Bryson, (ed.) (New York: Institute for Religious and Social Studies, 1948), p. 278. Used by permission of Harper & Brothers.

a planning board or a few members of the cast and crew, few ever hear them. They do not occupy places in libraries which are open to the public nor do they come back time and again to neighborhood theatres. Specific radio programs are often mentioned in newspaper or magazine columns, sometimes more than once, but there is no published bibliography on even the best of radio writers; no books devoted to the biography of a radio actor. Not one person out of twenty could give you the name of even one radio director. The transientness of radio drama makes necessary the development within the player of a kind of inward satisfaction—the satisfaction of a job well done, the approbation of his fellow players.

This personal satisfaction comes with the ability to put into a job or a performance the very best which you have in you and know that your best has been good enough. It is with the development of this “best” that this book is concerned.

A few words, therefore, upon the subjects which are treated in the following pages.

This book is made up of five sections, none of which is mutually exclusive. The reader is strongly urged to seek out his particular interests in relation to the whole of the volume.

Section One deals primarily with the foundational material which is most important to the beginning student of radio drama, no matter what his primary specialty may later become.

In Section Two, the previously given principles concerning the makeup and composition of the radio play are illustrated by applying them in the analysis of a particular play. By this means, we lay the groundwork for further application to almost any dramatic radio script.

Section Three is devoted to those particular problems and techniques that are peculiar to the presentation of drama on the air. It is here that you meet the prime challenges of presentation—characterization, microphone techniques, action, levels and balances, transitions, auditory perspectives—to name but a few. Insofar as is practicable, each facet of dramatic production has been approached from a point of view which is basic to each member of the production team: writer, director, actor, music man and sound man. How-

ever, when partiality is shown (as it often is), the direction is in the favor of the actor.

In Section Four will be found additional plays and excerpts for further study, exercise, and discussion. The excerpts have been chosen from radio plays that have been previously published, so that if the reader desires, he may obtain or refer to a copy of the book in which the whole play appears. Such reference will enable him to better understand how the segment fits in with the whole.

The Appendix contains three important tools for study. Appendix A combines a discussion of the nature of physical sound with a detailed, non-technical exposition on the nature and use of broadcast microphones. Appendix B is a rather comprehensive bibliography on the major facets of radio drama. The guide to the bibliography is on page 429. Appendix C contains suggested topics for class discussion.

Let us for a moment consider the main directions of each chapter of textual material (the first three sections).

A person who is attempting to learn something about a subject that is new to him will try to relate it to those which are perhaps more familiar to him. He will do this in Chapter 2, "A Comparison of Nondramatic Literature, Theatre, and Radio as Mass Communication Media."

In Chapter 3, "The Radio Play," we examine certain over-all characteristics of the radio play which make it different from the plays performed in other media.

Chapter 4, "The Analysis of Radio Drama," is a complete and thorough guide for analyzing the radio play. This is the primary foundational chapter.

Chapter 5, "*The Test*," introduces the play that will be used to illustrate the theoretical concepts in Chapter Four.

In Chapter 6, "The Form, Structure, and Analysis of *The Test*," a complete analysis of the play is made, using, for the most part, the method embodied in Chapter Four.

Chapter 7, "Analyzing the Characters in *The Test*," completes the study of the play. This chapter and the one preceding illustrate,

by putting into practice, the theoretical ideas and methods that have been expounded in Section One.

Chapter 8, "Characterization and Perspective," is the first chapter of the section devoted to problems and techniques in the presentation of radio drama. It is here that we start the process of creating flesh and blood out of descriptive words and speeches.

Chapter 9, "The Use and Misuse of Stereotypes," examines the reasons, causes, and effects of this practice from the viewpoint of the medium, the script, the actor, and the audience.

In Chapter 10, "Projecting the Action," we are concerned with the exposition and development of those mental, physical, and emotional actions of the radio actor through which he attempts to recreate a living character in the mind of the listener.

Chapter 11, "Preliminary to Performance," deals with those general problems of dramatic presentation which occur previous to the actual rehearsal and performance.

In Chapter 12, "Rehearsal and Performance Details," is a consideration of those elements and techniques in radio drama that form a part of the actual process of performances in rehearsal and during the broadcast.

Thus the order of the textual material follows a logical sequence, from consideration of the script to the final performance. The theories, methods, and techniques described in the following pages are shared by a good many persons who are working and teaching in the field of radio drama. But they are not necessarily the final word, and you should be on the alert to the possibilities of making such improvements, changes, or adaptations in them as will be to your own benefit.

A comparison of nondramatic literature, theatre, and radio as mass communication media

IN ORDER THAT we may better understand radio drama, let us compare some basic aspects of this medium of communication with others that are of longer standing and that are more familiar to us. The different media to be compared are nondramatic literature, theatre, and radio. Certain observations concerning television are included.

Mass communication denotes an appeal to a very large and heterogeneous audience. Basic, therefore, in these comparisons, is the appeal of the presentation to the audience. The audience is not the only possible touchstone for comparison. We could compare the media from an artistic or an aesthetic point of view, and certainly these would be much more desirable, culturally speaking. But the student should never forget that in the main, radio is one of the most commercial of the arts, and in approaching any commercial art form, one must be pragmatic. By this I do not mean that the beautiful and the artistic should be ignored. I mean that on the majority of programs the audience must be used as a measuring stick.

The argument has been advanced, and rightly, that the health of the contemporary play depends upon the existence of a sizeable group of persons who are less concerned with a mass audience than they are in advancing the art of literature and drama. These

creative artists play an important part in the literary and theatrical worlds, and through their experimentation directly and indirectly influence the patterns of literature and drama. But audiences cannot be hurried in their acceptances of newer forms of art, nor can they be forced into appreciation of more "artistic" things. Change and improvement in mass audience tastes is an evolutionary process which is often slow. Most people have a tendency to resent any attempt to force *avant-garde* concepts down their throats. And in our radio the wishes of the audience cannot too often be ignored. For these reasons, our measuring stick for comparing media of mass communication must be the audience. Let us now apply our measure.

TIME ELEMENT

THE AMOUNT OF time required for the reading of a book is, from the point of view of the reader, no particular barrier to the final understanding and enjoyment of the book. He may pick it up at intervals, read a chapter or two, and set it down for a while. He may re-read chapters or paragraphs. He makes his own reading time, reflecting on certain passages and skimming others. The reader of a book is in complete control of the reading process. The author realizes this, and by a series of attention cycles, or devices for securing and relaxing the reader's attention, attempts to guide the reader in his reading of the book.

Control of the time element in the theatre is in the hands of those who are presenting the show. It is very necessary that the play progress, but to provide for some audience relaxation and reflection (as well as to give a chance for change of scene), there are intermissions. But these create a problem. Because, for the most part, curtains are prefixed by rising action or a minor climax, it takes the audience a moment or two after the curtain rises on the next act or scene to get into the proper spirit and mood. The next scene does not generally start right where the last ended, with the actors in the same positions. And though the author of the play has interwoven the important action with less essential action, consciously created patterns of rising and falling suspense, and inter-

spersed excellent bits of material for relief; the main times for immediate audience reflection come between the acts or scenes.

Because the radio or television play is a continuous performance, because its presentation-time is comparatively short, because its audience is unseen, because its audience is so diversified, because of these and other considerations in the handling of time, radio players have very great problems to face. In radio one works with the clock. Or against it—according to the point of view. At any rate, time is an inescapable factor. It should, of course, be pointed out that one has curtains in radio, but as often as not these are designed solely for the purpose of inserting commercials.

Radio also has the same problem as the theatre in re-introducing the audience to the play, and re-orienting it in mood. This problem is probably not so difficult as it sounds, for these program interruptions are more or less an accepted convention of radio, and certain methods are used to put the listener back in the desired frame of reference. Such devices include narration, use of music, use of sound, or a combination of these. A short recapitulation and lead-in by the narrator, plus a repetition of the musical theme or leitmotiv, is probably the most generally accepted method. Then the actors plunge back into the story, hoping that the audience is with them.

In summary: The reader is in complete control of the reading process, but the author has attempted to guide him. Time element is no particular barrier to the final understanding and enjoyment of the book. The playgoer finds that passage of time is some barrier, and that control of the process is in the hands of those presenting the show. Because of radio's and television's split-second timing, the passage of time presents some important problems to both the player and the listener or televiewer; and, being continuous performances, they give the audience little time for reflection.

ATTRACTING AUDIENCE ATTENTION

IT MAY BE ARGUED that contemporary publishers make no bones about their efforts to attract readers by garish covers, beautiful bindings, provocative titles, illustrations, and other promotional material. In the body of the book, however, these devices are not

generally used in adult literature. Children's stories often start with a minor climax and work backward; but in the main, good adult fiction leads the reader gradually into the mood and spirit of the story. While many authors, especially of short stories, attempt an introduction which is attention-getting, they do not have the same need as radio players to obtain an immediate effect.

The same conclusion is reached in connection with theatre. In the first and most obvious place, devices for securing an audience aren't necessary, for the audience is already there. Even so, it is common practice to delay important action for the first few minutes of the play. This is done for a variety of reasons, chiefly to allow late-comers to take their places, to give the beginning exposition, and to establish proper mood and atmosphere.

But in radio and television just the opposite is true. For here are the most competitive of the media we are discussing. Here we are not dealing with a reader who has already bought a particular book to read. Here is not a customer who has already paid for his ticket and is comfortably seated in the theatre. Here is a listener or viewer who likely has several other things on his mind, and who—and this is very important—has a wide choice of fare. The reasons for obtaining immediate attention in radio or television are thus twofold: to hold the audience already tuned to the station which is carrying your program, and to obtain and hold the attention of the person who is just "dialing around." It is axiomatic that if the first couple of minutes of your radio or TV show are not attention-getting, then you had just as well say good-bye to a goodly number of rating points. You cannot, of course, plan on having the person who is attracted by an attention-getting opening stay with you for a bad show. You must have a show capable of holding your audience. But to hold them, you've got to get them first.

In summary: Through certain devices, the writer and publisher do attempt in some measure to attract the attention of the prospective buyer of a book. But in the writing of adult literature there is little need to use such devices as inverse climactic order for the sake of getting attention. In the theatre, the audience is present, and at the opening of the play there is less need for immediate

audience attention. In radio and television the competitive situation and the audience diversions make necessary an attempt to get and hold the audience from the very start.

ACTION

IT WOULD SEEM elementary to point out that in reading the sense of sight alone is involved; in the theatre and television the stimuli are to both the eye and ear; and in radio only the sense of hearing is involved. But elementary or not, the point should be stressed.

Though he may work in dialogue, action, sensory impressions, and symbols, the author presents his finished product in words. His characters think in words, speak in words, and their actions are *described* in words. The author faces a number of problems in describing action. He faces the problem of how much or how completely to describe the action. In the middle of a lovers' quarrel, the young lady gets up out of her chair and flounces across the room, opens the door, pauses for a parting barb, and slams the door in her lover's face. Actually the whole sequence in life might take but ten seconds. But if it is an important scene, the author has the problem of describing it in such a way as to indicate its significance. If he takes too much space to describe the action and tell the reaction, he is going to have difficulty in making it seem real to the reader. If he describes it in four or five lines (which take ten seconds to read), he may in effect be failing to make the most of his materials.

In the theatre action is *illustrated*. Through the efforts of director and actors, the author's conception of an action is given three dimensions and clothed in color, line, and rhythm. The young girl described in the last paragraph is now full-bodied and placed in a three-dimensional environment. Although words, in the form of dialogue, are involved—her parting barb from the door—there is no doubt in the minds of the audience as to how she actually moves across the room before making her exit. Unlike the reader of a book, the theatre-goer need not imaginatively reconstruct the action. He can see and hear it as it happens. The reader reads, "She walked determinedly," but the person in the theatre sees the determined

tread, her compressed lips, the stiffness of her knees, the vicious way she digs her heels into the carpet, her clenched hands, the flounce of her hair, and all of the many minute details which go into a complete stage picture. Action in the theatre is in this sense more true to life than action in literature.

At first thought, one might conclude that the possibilities for action in radio are very limited. For, since radio is purely aural, action in radio is *imaginative*. Unless a narrator is employed (and the prolific use of narration in describing action is generally looked upon as a weak and rather ineffective device), action is not described in so many words as in nondramatic literature; and certainly the audience cannot physically see the action. The action exists therefore solely in the minds of the audience. The listener must see in his mind's eye the events which are taking place. To imagine the action the listener must be guided and given the proper stimuli. This will be discussed in detail later, but for the present it is sufficient to realize that action on the radio is *imaginative*.

In television we have the combination of sight and sound which is found on the stage. However, because TV is much more intimate than theatre, the action is more restrained, with much less projection. The audience is a front-row audience, and they are seeing the action through the eyes of the camera.

In summary: Action in literature is *descriptive*, in theatre and television it is *illustrative* and in radio it is *imagined*.

VIVIDNESS

AN IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTIC of dramatic action of all sorts is vividness. Dramatic actions have vividness when ideas, characters, and their acts and emotions are communicated with graphic and expressive distinctness.

An excellent example of vividness of expression in literature is contained in Shelley's *A Defense of Poetry*.

Poetry turns all things to loveliness; it exalts the beauty of that which is most beautiful, and it adds beauty to that which is most deformed; it marries exultation and horror, grief and pleasure, eter-

nity and change; it subdues to union under its light yoke all irreconcilable things. It transmutes all that it touches, and every form moving within the radiance of its presence is changed by wondrous sympathy to an incarnation of the spirit which it breathes; its secret alchemy turns to potable gold the poisonous waters which flow from death through life; it strips the veil of familiarity from the world, and lays bare the naked and sleeping beauty, which is the spirit of its forms.

There can be no doubt that the diction in this paragraph is most vivid. The words themselves, their connotations, the near poetry of this prose, combine to draw for the reader a sharp, clear, out-of-the-ordinary image. And yet it seems to many that words can never quite be as vivid as the object itself in life. It is granted that there may be disagreement as to whether or not a sensitive, poetic person is more stimulated by a rhapsody on a red rose or by the red rose itself, given, of course, the proper attendant surroundings for each experience. But the majority of those who constitute the audience for our present-day artistic endeavors are affected less by the written word than by the spoken word or the seen object.

Combining as it does the elements of sight with sound, theatre possesses one of the strongest means of achieving vividness. If the author has given to the actor a vehicle that makes the most of word imagery, the added stimuli of the spoken word, plus scenery, costumes, and live persons combine so that the average member of an audience may be expected to receive a much more distinct picture than the average reader of a book, a picture embellished with the elements necessary for vividness.

In radio, ear plus imagination makes possible a high level in vividness of expression, for the recreating of the actions, ideas, settings, and characters are couched in the full background of the listener's life and experience.

Television, like the theatre, combines sight with sound, and thus shares with the theatre one of the strongest methods of achieving vividness. The conditions under which a television show is received by its audience may make for less possible vividness, however, than the theatre. The audience may not be communicated to directly,

and size of the ordinary home screen limits the sweep and inclusion of the drama which can be projected from the stage.

In summary: Vividness of expression is possible to a great degree in each of the media. In literature the tools are words, and the "translation" of these words into emotion ordinarily makes for less impact than in other media. In theatre and television sight and sound are tools, but probably television lacks some of the vividness possessed by the theatre because of the mechanical limitations. Radio's use of sound, coupled with the imagination of the listener, makes for great possibilities of vividness of expression.

THE AUDIENCE SITUATION

PERHAPS THE MOST important thing about the reading audience is that it is an individual audience. Except in rare instances, the person who reads a book reads to himself. The author then is communicating to one particular person, who is presumably not engaged in any other mental activity that demands continued attention. Reading is a major mental activity, one that is not ordinarily combined with sustained conversation or bridge. The reading audience is likely an interested audience—interested enough to buy or borrow the book. It is, moreover, very often a paying audience. The payment has been direct and specific in amount. Even if the book has been borrowed from a library or friend, the reader has gone out of his way to get it. The reading audience is individual, interested, paying.

The theatre audience is different from the reading audience in that here we have a true audience situation where several hundred persons have come to a specific place, at a specific time, for a specific purpose—that of seeing and listening to a specific play. The theatre audience is a special audience. Theatre-going is not a common activity, and the person who goes to the theatre usually makes a special occasion out of it. He is prepared to be entertained. He is in the proper frame of mind to relax and enjoy the play in the company of fellow theatre-goers. Moreover, the audience is a paying audience. When a person puts down cold cash for a ticket, he is usually proving his interest. The theatre audience is an interested audience, a paying audience, in a true audience situation.

Unlike the theatre audience, the radio audience is not a "special" one. Radio is much more closely woven into the immediate pattern of our daily lives than any other large-scale means of communication, not excepting even newspapers and magazines. The average person in America spends more time each day listening to the radio than on any other activities except sleeping and working. To him a radio is not merely an instrument of culture, a method of receiving news, a source of pleasure or gratification, a provider of entertainment. Radio to him is part and parcel of his way of life. No, the radio audience is not usually a special one.

But perhaps the most important thing about the radio audience is that instead of one huge audience of say twelve million people, we have really six million audiences of one, or two, or three people. The person or family listening to "Suspense" in Wichita, Kansas, is affected not one whit by the person or family listening to the same program in Keokuk.

One other thing about this radio audience must be realized. To the average listener his radio fare is absolutely free. His radio is as natural a possession to him as clothing. It costs about as much as a new suit or two and certainly lasts longer. He forgets the little repair bills. He does not think of the small but steady cost of electric current. He does not think of the small added advertising cost per product which he partially pays. The listener pays, but the payment is so painless that to the average listener, radio is free. We can say then that we know this much about the radio audience: It is an individual audience, not a "special" audience; it is heterogeneous; and it regards its radio entertainment as free.

In summary: The reading audience is individual, interested, paying. The theatre audience is a special audience, an interested audience, a paying audience in a true audience situation. The radio audience is an individual one, not a "special" audience, heterogeneous, and believes its radio entertainment comes free.

APPROACHING THE AUDIENCE

A GENERAL STATEMENT might be made that all three media are intended for consumption by a broad audience, and generally speak-

ing, the statement would be true. For our purposes, however, it will be better to be more specific.

The author of a novel has some freedom of choice in selecting his audience and aiming his book toward a particular audience if he so desires. This audience may be a general or a specific audience. To illustrate, the novelist may aim for a very broad audience by using basic drives and emotions and trying to incorporate elements that are felt and understood by all kinds of people. By using plain language, a not-too-complicated plot, a fairly simple approach, typical characters, and other more or less uninvolved devices, the novelist may aim his story at a very general audience. Such considerations, perhaps, led to *Gone With the Wind* and *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*. Another novelist may, on the other hand, aim toward a more specific audience. He may not be content to write for a mass audience, but he may, like Dos Passos, wish to promulgate a theme or idea even if he does so among a somewhat more limited group. Or he may, like the author of the Tom Swift books, be writing for a particular age level. Whatever his reason, he designs his novel to appeal to a particular audience. The author need not be limited by the necessity for appealing to all and sundry.

The playwright, director, and stage actor have at the onset a more or less special audience. While it is true that some plays are designed to appeal to a wider audience than others, the fact remains that not all people attend the theatre. A limited group of persons in almost every locality make up the bulk of play-goers, whether the play is presented on Broadway in New York City, or on Main Street of Dodge City. For this reason, the theatre audience is by nature more or less special.

While it is no doubt true that radio and TV definitely cater to specific audiences time and time again, under our system most of the "big time" radio is based on very large and nonselective audience appeal. One need only to call attention to the not-too-long-ago struggle between two great radio networks over such valuable properties as Amos and Andy, Jack Benny, Edgar Bergen, and others, to realize that the most profitable possessions of the industry are those which appeal to a great many different audiences.

But it is not only of listener taste or preferences we are speaking when we talk of specific audiences. We are also speaking of interests, necessities, age, sex, socio-economic characteristics, and the other audience characteristics that are discussed in Chapter 4. There are many shows that aim for such specific audiences as these. A show that advertises dog biscuits, for example, may be aimed at listeners who have or are particularly fond of dogs. These listeners constitute the primary audience to which the show would be directed. But does that mean that the sponsors are interested only in this audience? Certainly not. For there are many marginal groups that contribute greatly to the sale of advertised merchandise, although they are not primary purchasers. The husband who stops by the store on his way home to pick up a can of coffee or a bar of soap may unconsciously select a particular brand, his preference initially stimulated and reinforced by a series of commercials on the radio. By this one simple action he may start a whole new buying habit in his household. The child certainly is not a primary purchaser, yet there are many programs aimed at him in an effort to reach his parents. I do not have a dog, but I have several friends who do. And one of these days the children may insist upon adding a pup to the family. Is the dog food manufacturer interested in reaching me? Naturally.

Because of the extremely commercial nature of radio and television, program planners are forced to reach for the largest audience possible. While they perhaps make a greater effort to reach their primary audience, they certainly do not stint in their efforts to attract and win secondary audiences.

PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

IN LITERATURE, the person who is writing a piece of fiction attempts in a definite manner to lead the reader into the development of his novel. He sets up a pattern of attention cycles, a series of incidents, a progression of action, a succession of climactic incidents. He is careful to give the reader well-defined stopping places, but he is equally sure to point out to the reader the desirability of continuing. One finds it difficult to believe that the authors of *Anthony*

Adverse or *U.S.A.* intended that the reader read the whole book at one sitting. The author can, and does, suggest by these various methods the desired and easiest way of reading and understanding his work, but he can suggest only; he cannot control the reader. The process of communication is dependent to a very great extent upon the reader.

In the theatre, with a true audience situation, the process of communication is much more in the hands of the playmakers. The playwright naturally follows the pattern of incident, action, climax, and resolution, as described above, but he thinks in terms of a controlled audience, rather than an uncontrolled one. He not only can but does guide the audience along the desired path, and with a firmer hand than the novelist. In the theatre, the process of communication is more or less controlled by the play.

In radio and television, the listener is in control of the communicative process. Radio and TV are highly competitive, and there is ever the necessity of keeping the listener interested. From the performer's point of view, it was bad enough when the listeners had dial tuning. With the advent of push-button tuning the listener needs only to use his index finger, where formerly both the index finger and the thumb were necessary. Then too, he has a little switch that can turn the radio off. This is catastrophe.

Seriously, while the radio dramatist is always concerned with doing justice to his show, the fact that the listener has a choice of several other offerings at the same time tends to keep him on his toes. To attract and keep his listener, he may feel that he is obligated to distort or over-emphasize the progression of action and climax. This has, in radio, encouraged a trend to the melodramatic approach. There is nothing whatever wrong with melodrama, except that when it becomes the basis of the majority of the dramatic programs on the air, it loses a great deal of its impact.

In summary: The process of communication in literature is dependent to a great extent upon the reader. In the theatre the process of communication is more or less controlled by the play. In radio and television the listener is in control of the communicative process.

THEMATIC FREEDOM

EVERYONE WHO WORKS in a medium of mass communication must understand the inherent and pragmatic restrictions of his medium. The problem involves not only good taste, important as that consideration is. It involves also the actual methodology of approaching the audience in the most competent possible manner within the limitations of the medium involved.

Of all the media, literature is granted most freedom in choice of theme, development, characters employed, and evolution of those characters. The author may have, for his subject, matters which are ordinarily taboo for the playwright and script writer.

The theatre offers a great deal of thematic freedom—less perhaps than literature, but certainly more than radio. In the first place (and we are speaking now more of the professional than the educational theatre) the audience is generally a more sophisticated one. Merely crossing the threshold of a legitimate playhouse makes the customer more sophisticated, even if only in his own mind. This metamorphosis has the effect of making the theatre audience somewhat special. It is willing and even eager to participate in an experience to which in other circumstances it might object. The theatre audience, being more mature and sophisticated, gives to the dramatist a great deal of freedom in his selection and treatment of various themes.

Now for a long-standing argument: "If radio and TV are limited in their selections of theme; if their approach and treatment of theme must be such that every auditor is satisfied as to their purity; if every Negro and Caucasian, Catholic, Protestant, and Jew, boss and worker, Republican and Democrat, must be appeased; and if on top of that the show must resist irking a sponsor and a network vice president—if these conditions obtain, can there be much dramatic impact left?" This might be an actual quotation if we were to make a very brief synthesis of the remarks of some of radio's nimble-tongued critics.

To which radio's ardent apologists might reply: "Every medium has its own advantages and limitations. Radio goes into your home

as an invited guest. It is expected to behave with the propriety you would expect of any other guest. If it is selective in its treatment of contemporary life, so is the person who prefers Picasso to Albright. If radio is to fulfill its obligation as a medium of mass communication, then it must be able to communicate to the masses." So go the arguments of the theorists. As usual, each side has something to offer to the person who is trying to approach the question objectively.

There is little doubt that from the completely artistic point of view, the size and heterogeneity of the audience and the commercial aspects of radio and television tend to reduce their full artistic potentialities. But on the other hand, the enormous size of the listening audience is certainly a compensating factor.

Whether or not broadcasting takes full advantage of its materials is not open to much argument. Most practicing radio workers deplore the lack of artistry in our everyday radio fare. But these same people realize that they work under a particular system which probably will, in the long run, be just about as effective as any other system of radio. The industry in the United States boasts of a great many intelligent, forward-thinking men and women who devote much of their talents and energies to making radio (and TV) better. But they can do it only when the audiences and sponsors will go along.

In summary: Of all the media, literature is granted most freedom in choice of theme, development, characters employed, and evolution of those characters. The theatre offers a great deal of thematic freedom, less perhaps than literature, but certainly more than radio. Both radio and television are invited guests, and should act so. This does not mean that they cannot be realistic, but they should not be vulgar for vulgarity's sake. Television actors must be particularly careful because of the visual element involved.

CHAPTER

3

The radio play

EACH MEDIUM of dramatic communication has some advantages over the others, and it has some disadvantages or limitations inherent in its own physical or mechanical structure. Though there are comparatively few plays which are absolutely not adaptable to all the media, each medium favors certain types of plays.

Fantasy, for instance, is favored by radio because of the free imaginative element involved. Realistic drama is generally favored in the theatre because of the three-dimensional element. Swash-buckling, heroic dramas, and fast-moving adventure melodramas are favorites of screen producers because of the flexibility of their medium, and its combination of sight plus sound. In television, the more intimate forms of the drama, such as character or situation comedy and serious drama, may be presented to advantage.

We may, however, make the general statement that a good play in one medium will embody the same, or very similar dramatic characteristics when it is adapted for another medium. There are, to be sure, some differences in each form; but they are, in the main, differences in degree, in technique, and in manner or presentation. Let us look at some of these dramatic characteristics in the light of their use in the radio play.

DRAMATIC ECONOMY

ONE OF THE BASIC laws of the drama is that of dramatic economy. In essence, this law states that the unessential parts of a play should

be left out; that there should be few, if any, wanderings into the byways of material not necessary for the development of plot, theme, characters, or audience understanding or appeal. In radio drama particularly, dramatic economy is a most important consideration, for here more than anywhere is a necessity for compression. Dramatic radio shows usually average less than thirty minutes—sometimes much less—and in that short period little unessential material should be allowed to creep in.

ACTION

ACTION OF SOME SORT is necessary in any type of drama, but in radio drama action is practically inevitable, for sound itself is action, and sound is the medium of radio.

... The ticking of a clock, for instance, is static like the form and colour of an object, but the great majority of sounds imply momentary, actual *happening*! . . . Activity, then, is of the essence of sound, and an event will be more easily accepted by the ear than a state of being. But this is the very aim of drama! Drama is the course of an event in time: it contains action and should render the static only in so far as is necessary for the comprehension of the event.¹

COMPRESSION

IN THE STAGE PLAY, time is allotted at the beginning for exposition, the characters can be gradually evolved, the plot unraveled in due time, and the action given a chance to build. Not so in radio drama.

In the first place, competitive and commercial aspects decree that the listener's attention must be caught at the beginning of the show and held through until the finish. To accomplish this several types of attention-getting openings have been developed. One of the more important types is the teaser. For example:

ANNOUNCER: This is WBBM, Chicago. We now join the facilities of the Columbia Broadcasting System.

You check your watch—then reach over to turn to another station for the program you generally listen to at this time. But before you touch the knob, an eerie voice floats out of the loudspeaker.

¹ Rudolph Arnheim, *Radio* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1936), p. 153.

VOICE: Bolt the doors. Fasten the windows. Put out the lights. Sit down quietly in the dark—and meet *The Ghost of Benjamin Sweet*.

SOUND: *Bloodcurdling shriek of wind which segues into eerie music.*²

Did you turn that dial? Millions didn't and thus made the acquaintance of one of radio's most famous and charming characters. It must be admitted that this is a far cry from the usual opening of a play in the legitimate theatre.

The principle of catching and holding the attention of the listener is but one facet of compression. Exposition is another. Most of the exposition in a radio drama is given very sketchily, either being incorporated into the dialogue in appropriate places where it does not interfere with the action, or given very succinctly by a narrator. Here for instance is the opening sequence of *The Silver Cord* as presented by the "Theatre Guild on the Air." It is an excellent example of exposition by dialogue.

SOUND: *Car traveling at fair speed for several seconds. Horn.*

CHRIS: Whoa . . . take it easy, Dave.

DAVID: You don't know how it feels! Every landmark I see gives me an itchy toe. There's the old school I used to go to.

CHRIS: Uh-huh.

SOUND: *Car slows down a bit.*

DAVID: Now darling, keep your eyes open. As we get around this curve, you'll see the pond.

CHRIS: Your own pond?

DAVID: Yep. Where Rob and I skated every year. And right next to that, the house. There—

SOUND: *After a moment, car slows further.*

CHRIS: David! It's beautiful! I love a Colonial house.

DAVID: Mother's full of tradition. Up to her ears. . . . You'll like Mother, no kidding.

² Frederick and Pauline Gilsdorf, *The Ghost of Benjamin Sweet*, opened on "Columbia Workshop," January 8, 1938. On the first broadcast of the Benjamin Sweet series, the teaser opening was not used. On two subsequent repeat broadcasts CBS did use the teaser.

- CHRIS: Of course.
- DAVID: Really, I'm *sure* you'll get along.
- CHRIS: Why shouldn't we?
- DAVID: And you'll like Rob, too.
- CHRIS: Rob—didn't get in the service, did he?
- DAVID: No, he was rejected for the draft. Kind of nervous, you know. Swell fellow, though. Well, here we are.
- SOUND: *Car comes to a halt, car door opens, light wind background.*
- DAVID: Well, Mrs. Phelps.
- CHRIS: I feel sort . . . of scared.
- DAVID: You scared? Hah. Hand me that bag there.
- CHRIS: Here you are.
- SOUND: *Suitcase bumping . . . Car door closing.*
- DAVID: Come on . . .
- SOUND: *Footsteps up to house through following.*
- DAVID: I'm kind of nervous myself. Shaking all over, I'm so excited.
- CHRIS: It's cold, isn't it?
- DAVID: Very cold.
- SOUND: *Steps halt, doorbell ringing.*
- DAVID: Imagine . . . Over three years . . .
- SOUND: *Door opens . . . pause.*
- HESTER: Hullo! You want Mrs. Phelps?
- DAVID: Hey . . . Who are you?
- HESTER: Well, I'm . . .
- DAVID: Don't tell me! You're the girl my brother Rob's going to marry.
- HESTER: Right! I'm Hester. And you're David!
- DAVID: That's right! Gosh, I'm glad to know you. Hester, meet Christina . . . My wife.³

³ Erik Barnouw's radio adaptation of Sidney Howard's *The Silver Cord*, in *Theatre Guild on the Air*, ed. by H. William Fitelson (New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1947) pp. 103-34.

In the first minute or two of this opening sequence we have made the acquaintance (either by direct meeting or by reference) of all the principal characters of the play. The situation is fairly clear. David has been away to war for three years, this is his homecoming, and he has brought a new wife to meet his mother. Rob is engaged to Hester. The setting is in the north. The time—winter. A problem or conflict (between Christina and the Mother) has been hinted at with David's rather unsure "Really, I'm *sure* you'll get along."

Compare the method of handling the exposition in the above sequence with this opening narration in Morton Wishengrad's *The Battle of Warsaw Ghetto*.

NARRATOR: (*Simply.*) My name was Isaac Davidson and I lived in the Polish city of Lublin with my wife Dvora and Samuel, our son. When Poland fell, they herded us into a cattle car and transported us to the Ghetto of Warsaw. It was a place in purgatory and around that purgatory they had built a brick wall and another wall of barbed wire and beyond the wire stood a third wall of soldiers armed with bayonets.¹

Ofttimes these separate techniques of dialogue or narration are joined together in combination. Here is a particularly effective example in Arthur Arent's radio adaptation of Eugene O'Neill's *Ah, Wilderness!* which was presented by the "Theatre Guild on the Air."

MUSIC: *A few introductory chords and then it segues into "Bedelia." . . . The melody seeps in, and then, as the strings take over, the music fades underneath until cue.*

NARRATOR: Tonight we turn back the pages of time for a nostalgic hour. It is the year 1906, in the United States of America. Teddy Roosevelt is in the White House, there's a blacksmith on every Main Street, and the automobile is a luxury item. The women are wearing Merry Widow hats, chatelaine bags, and black lisle stockings with lace openwork. And the men? Ah, the men have discovered peg-top trousers, those strange indispensables you can climb into only by

¹ Morton Wishengrad, *The Eternal Light* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1947) pp. 33-45.

removing your shoes. There is a pug dog and a zither in every home. And the title on the sheet music on every piano is . . . "Bedelia."

MUSIC: *Up. . . Two young, fresh voices, a boy's and a girl's, are heard singing the words.*

NARRATOR: And now that we've established the color and the period, I'd like you to meet the Miller Family. They live in a large small town in Connecticut, where Nat Miller is the owner and publisher of the local newspaper . . . First, there's Tommy, the youngest . . .

SOUND: *Running footsteps approach.*

TOMMY: *(Calling.)* Aw, I don't want any more milk, Ma. And I said excuse me and you said all right . . . Can I go out and play now, Ma?

MRS. MILLER: *(Off. Correcting him.)* May I go out and . . .

TOMMY: *(Quickly.)* May I?

MRS. MILLER: Yes. But you set off your crackers away from the house, remember!

TOMMY: *(Joyfully.)* Yes, ma'am.

SOUND: *Door slams . . . approaching footsteps.*

NARRATOR: This is Mildred and Arthur. Two more of the Miller children.

MILDRED: Children?

NARRATOR: I beg your pardon, Mildred. Of course you're not a child any more. Er . . . how old are you?

MILDRED: Fifteen and four months.

NARRATOR: Of course . . . Er, suppose you describe yourself.

MILDRED: Well, I'm tall and rather slender. I've got a nice nose and gray eyes and er, well, I think I'm attractive.

NARRATOR: What are you wearing?

MILDRED: I've got on high black shoes with French heels, a long black pleated skirt, very full at the bottom, and a white shirt waist. My hair is up, of course.

NARRATOR: Thank you . . . What about you, Arthur?

ARTHUR: I am a sophomore at Yale.

- NARRATOR: Thank *you*.
- SOUND: *Footsteps approach. . . .Voices ad libbing.*
- NARRATOR: And here, unless I am mistaken, are Mrs. Miller and Aunt Lily . . .
- MRS. MILLER: Goodness, Tommy's left the screen door open! The house will be alive with flies.
- SOUND: *Door slams shut.*
- LILY: Well, you can't expect a boy to remember to shut doors on the Fourth of July.
- SOUND: *Mandolin tuning up.*
- MRS. MILLER: That's you all over, Lily. You'll have that boy spoiled to death in spite of me. Phew, I'm hot. Aren't you? This is going to be a scorcher. Arthur, get up and let your Aunt Lily sit down. Take your mandolin over to the window seat.
- ARTHUR: Certainly. Aunt Lily, my chair.
- LILY: Thank you, dear.
- SOUND: *Arthur begins to play "Waltz Me Around Again, Willie" on the mandolin. . . .Footsteps approach.*
- NARRATOR: (*Over the music.*) And here come the gentlemen . . .Mr. Nathaniel Miller, himself, and Uncle Sid Davis. Nat has just turned fifty. He's a little stoop-shouldered now, from reading copy, and his hair—well, let's call it thin.
- NAT: What's the name of that piece, Arthur?
- ARTHUR: "Waltz Me Around Again, Willie."
- SID: Sure, I know that one . . . (*Sings.*) "Waltz me around again, Willie, waltz me around again, dear . . . (*etc.*) . . ."
- NARRATOR: (*Over the singing.*) Uncle Sid is Mrs. Miller's brother, but he is *not* married to Aunt Lily. There's been talk about it for twenty years now, but Aunt Lily won't have him, because—well, you'll hear about that later. (*Song up and out as chorus is finished.*) Well, I guess that's about everybody, except Richard.
- NAT: Arthur, where *is* Richard?

- ARTHUR: He's still in the dining room, reading a book. Gosh, he's always reading now. What's got into him, anyhow?
- NAT: He reads his schoolbooks, too, strange as that may seem to you. That's why he came out top of his class. I'm hoping before you leave New Haven they'll find time to teach you reading is a good habit.
- ARTHUR: Sure, but not the way he does it. I believe in moderation.⁵

These three opening sequences from three different plays serve to illustrate quite graphically the three major methods of handling the opening exposition so that the listener grasps the background and situation and gets acquainted with the characters, and at the same time is led into the mood of the play. By using dialogue or narration which is carefully compressed, the writer has managed to get across the essential exposition in the shortest possible time. And to do it most effectively. Other methods of compression are used in radio drama—montages, for instance (see pages 219 and 367). The above examples will, however, serve to introduce the method.

DEVELOPMENT

THE TWO GENERAL methods of developing a play are by plot or episode. In its classical context, plot development differs from episodic development in that in the former each scene in the play grows out of the preceding one and leads into the following one. There is, therefore, a natural progression of action and character. Episodic development is that "in which it is neither probable nor necessary that the episodes follow each other."⁶ In ordinary drama it is usually rather simple to decide which development is used, and the same holds true for much radio drama. But quite often in radio drama there seems to be a curious combination of the two which is quite effective. We shall see an example later on in Joseph Russell's *The Test*.

⁵ Arthur Arent's radio adaptation of Eugene O'Neill's *Ah, Wilderness!*, in *Theatre Guild on the Air*, ed. by Fitelson, pp. 175-201.

⁶ Aristotle, *Poetics*, Chap. 9.

NECESSITY FOR CLEAR ACTION

IN NO OTHER mass medium of artistic communication is it more necessary than in radio that action be made completely clear to the audience. The fact that the audience can only hear and cannot see must always be kept in mind. Too often the radio artist is so close to his play that he must make a specific effort to remain objective—to look at the play from the point of view of the audience. What seems perfectly clear to him may leave his listeners with little understanding of what is supposed to be happening.

Though one might very plausibly argue that unless the listener pays close attention to the play he will get comparatively little from it, experience dictates the necessity for requiring a minimum of attention from the average listener. To those who say that radio drama panders to the listeners by requiring so little from them, the commonsense answer is that the person who is working in a medium which is for the most part a “glamorized pitch” must realize on which side his bread is buttered.

This is not to say that radio drama is not or cannot be artistic. It is to say that the radio player must be completely aware of the nature, scope, and function of the play he is doing, and of the medium in which he is performing. The player must know in what type of radio play he is currently directing his efforts. He must know the reason for that particular play. Is it to sell refrigerators or cigarettes? Is it an institutional show? Is it a prestige show? Is it an educational sustainer?

The purist, objecting to this approach, says in effect that neither the actor nor the author should concern himself with the commercial aspects of the show he is doing. He says that if the show is a good (artistic) show, that the player has completed his contract. And there is much truth in this logic. But a more realistic approach is made by the practicing radio player who inquires as to the nature of the whole effort rather than his particular segment. The player on the “Lux Radio Theatre” knows that the directors of Lever Brothers are not being altruistic to the annual tune of a million and a half dollars in talent and time costs. He knows that his future (with that

company, at any rate) is inextricably tied in with the sales charts. The actor on the "NBC Theatre" is in a different category. The show of which he is a part is, by nature, a public service prestige program. His assignment is to provide good theatre for the serious contemplation of a large and general audience.

This established difference in levels of communication is of direct concern to the player in his approach to the action of the show. He knows that it is quite possible to listen to a "soap opera" and at the same time perform a multitude of household tasks. It is quite impossible to get the maximum pleasure out of "Theatre Guild on the Air" or the "NBC Theatre" unless one listens rather closely. The radio worker must realize which listening approach the general audience takes toward his play and must approach his audience from the same point of view.

NECESSITY FOR STRONG STORY-LINE

THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE between the purists and the pragmatists is particularly vehement in the area of relative importance of plot and character. On the one hand, the purists will firmly state that the literature, both dramatic and nondramatic, that has come down through the ages has depended for much of its appeal on the characterizations that were drawn and allowed to develop and mature. The more practical will raise a cynical eyebrow, point to the mass audience, and utter the time-worn phrase, "Everyone likes a story."

Radio drama is for the main part aimed, and probably will continue to be aimed, at a wide audience. And, as in the periodicals and the movies, its artistic elements will, for better or worse, be subordinated to its sales elements. This situation serves to emphasize the "story" aspects of radio drama, for in the majority of radio plays the story line or plot is the most important part of the offering. Indeed, there is excellent precedent for this situation, for did not Aristotle list plot first among his six elements of drama?

CLARITY AND SIMPLICITY

RADIO AS A MEANS of dramatic expression has been attacked on the grounds that radio plays are too often hackneyed and trite, too

simple in approach, and too brief in length. All of these are valid criticisms, but a realistic concept of radio in the United States forces the conclusion that a play which is aimed at the general listener must employ simple methods of presentation and keep within certain time limits. The reasons for these restrictions are also valid. The average listener would feel quite "put upon" if he were to be consistently forced to miss the beginning of one favorite show because another favorite on a different station consistently ran overtime. Then too—less tangible, perhaps, but just as important—the attention to and concern with time lends a kind of solidity of structure to the art and the business.

For better or worse, the majority of radio programs have been aimed at an audience which is comprised of those people in the middle and lower social, economic, and educational group. The products normally advertised on the air are those that are used by a great number of people, and that are cheap enough to be bought by most people. Witness the great soap, cereal, and cigarette manufacturers who allot millions of advertising dollars each year to their radio accounts. They believe, and it sounds logical, that they must reach a mass audience in order to obtain the mass sales upon which they depend. Their approach is pragmatic, and it is likely to remain so. When a sponsor is paying five hundred to a thousand dollars for each minute of broadcast time, he expects to obtain maximum results. And maximum results from a mass audience are obtainable only if the broader aspects of dramaturgy are employed. One has only to glance at the number of melodramas and sentimental comedies on the air to verify this statement.

It is simply impossible in twenty-five minutes to develop a complicated plot and sub-plot, establish and evolve a group of complex characterizations, engage in involved dialogue, and expect it to be communicated to the average radio listener. Many established radio writers and directors agree that for the most part a quarter-hour show should employ not more than three or four major characters and three or four scenes; a half-hour show five or six major characters and six or seven scenes. These are not arbitrary rules; they are merely the result of many observations. When more characters

than these are introduced, the listener may have trouble learning to identify them in the short time. This identification, either conscious or unconscious on the part of the listener, is necessary for his comprehension of the characters. His comprehension of the story is directly related to the number of scenes. Too many might befuddle him; not enough change could easily cause him to lose interest.

These restrictions may be boiled down to this precept: in most sponsored radio drama a real effort should be made to keep it simple and clear, and avoid secondary plot structures and complex dialogue and characters. Often these restrictions tend to act as a deterrent to artistic production. They need not so act. The simple strand of pearls can be of high intrinsic value.

✓ MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS

MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS are staples of all the media of dramatic production. Theatre, cinema, television—all of these depend on music and sound to help in effective presentation. But it is in radio, the only truly nonvisual art, that music and sound effects are probably of the greatest potential use.

Radio drama is built upon all kinds of meaningful sound—sound that means something when it is perceived by the listener. This sound may take the form of words; and of course, dialogue forms the major portion of the radio script. It is the most complex and the most important. But of great importance also are the other elements which not only enhance the flavor of the radio play but also add to its artistic value.

The reader will have no difficulty in locating extensive treatments of sound effects and music in radio drama. The most complete and authoritative are listed in the bibliography, and most production manuals deal to a greater or less degree with these subjects. Our aim, therefore, is to summarize the uses of music and sound in radio drama for your present guidance.⁷

⁷ The interested reader will certainly not want to miss Felix Felton's provocative chapter on "The Use of Music," in *The Radio Play* (London: Sylvan Press, 1949), and Robert Turnbull's excellent book, *Radio and Television Sound Effects* (New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1951).

MUSIC

THE BEGINNING STUDENT of radio drama almost invariably has his most disheartening experiences with the selection or understanding of the music to be used. This struggle often seems to stem almost as much from cloudy thinking on the nature and purpose of the music required or used as it does from the lack of background or training in music. A person choosing music for a show should realize not only how the music is used structurally in the play, but also how it contributes to the logical and emotional understanding of the play: in other words, how the music is used, and why the music is used.

As a structural part of the show, music is used (or may be used), generally speaking, in the following places:

1. *Opening (or program) theme.*

A strong opening theme makes for strong program identification. It also contributes to a strong identification of both product and sponsor. There are probably few radio listeners indeed who do not recognize the *whoeee-da-da-DUM* which heralds the "Mystery Theatre"; or associate *DUM-da-DUM-da-dum-de-DA*, with any other soap but L-A-V-A.

2. *Curtain (or opening curtain).*

Curtain music is designed to lead directly into the opening scene of the play. In its entirety it should reflect the nature or mood of the coming play. The curtain is generally changed from week to week, conforming with the changing play or opening scene, whereas the theme remains the same. The curtain may be an entity in itself, separating the play from the commercial continuity; or, in the case of a sustaining show using little introductory continuity, it may be segued with the theme.

3. *Transitional or bridge music.*

Music is perhaps the device most often used to bridge the action from one scene to the next. The good transition ties off and leads out of the preceding scene, effects a "bridge" between the two scenes, and leads into the succeeding scene.

4. *Background music.*

Music may be used in conjunction with dialogue or sound effects to achieve a clearer, more logical, or more emotionally appealing effect. The orchestra playing the entr'acte while our primary attention is focused upon the dialogue in the box, the martial music accompanying the heavy tread of marching soldiers, the passionate music which sneaks in behind the lovers' scene—these are but a few examples of how background music may be used.

5. *Montage.*

Music is often used to integrate a montage with the contiguous scenes. Here the effect is a combination one, employing short transitions before and after the montage sequence, very short bridges between the separate scenes or lines of the montage, and general background for the individual scenes or lines of the montage.

6. *Curtain or close.*

Curtain music is that which ends the play proper. This closing music carries the last scene and the play to its proper emotional conclusion.

7. *Closing theme.*

The closing theme is generally in the same musical vein as the opening theme, except that its spirit is one of conclusion, rather than of beginning.

Music contributes to the drama when it is used to:

1. *Set the place or scene.*

A bridge based on a variation of "Sidewalks of New York," for instance, could mean only one thing, as would "California, Here I Come." The music might be more suggestive than absolutely descriptive. For instance: "London Again Suite," "Manhattan Towers," etc.

2. *Suggest the locale.*

Music can often suggest a specific or significant aspect of the scene. "The Grand Canyon Suite" calls forth images of the

grandeur of the chasm; "La Mer" is possessed with the swelling of the waves.

3. *Suggest the mood or atmosphere of the play as a whole, and of individual scenes.*

Gaité Parisienne, and music of a like nature, would, of course suggest a scene and locale, but it also suggests an atmosphere of brittle brilliance.

4. *Heighten the mood or atmosphere.*

Music is often used in conjunction with dialogue or sound effects to heighten the atmosphere or mood of a particular scene. Love music behind dialogue of passion, action music heightening the chase, stirring music backing up the sound of marching feet and the hurried farewell—these are common examples of a common use of music in radio drama.

5. *Suggest a particular period.*

If we were to open the play with music played upon a harpsichord, the listener would be, in part at least, prepared for a scene laid in the seventeenth century. "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" would suggest certain stirring moments in our history, and so on.

6. *Suggest and/or heighten a particular action.*

When music is used to project a particular action, it generally intensifies or heightens it at the same time: thus the familiar ascending and descending *da-da-da-da-daaa-dedede dum* of the villain or the intruder in a haunted house. This is, of course, a very simple example, but it illustrates the method. The measured, short, tortured beats which accent the downward stroke of the lash on a bare back; the short, labored, musical gasps which denote the climber's agonies in gaining the last few feet to safety—these are other examples of the many many ways that music can suggest and heighten particular actions.

7. *As a leitmotif.*

Music may be used throughout the play to suggest a particular character, situation, or idea. The recurrent use of such a theme assists in the identifying and associative relationship between

the listener and the character, situation, or idea. Perhaps the most lavish use of such motifs occurs in *Peter and the Wolf*.

8. *To punctuate a particular speech.*

In eight out of ten (rough guess) dramatic scripts, there will be at least one musical direction reading "stab," or "stinger." This may, for instance, be the familiar tense chord of the melodrama "Okay, Joe, git him—now! (*Music: stings, then under.*)" or it may be of a comic nature "(*Discordant comic stab by tongued brass, then muted trumpets laughing.*)" There are, of course, many variations, varying from swells to chimes and from farce to tragedy.

9. *As a sound effect.*

Probably the most familiar is the old standard "train music." But the imaginative radio dramatic worker is always alert to suggest a particular sound by the use of music. The swelling of the waves, the roll of the ship, the cacophony of traffic, the hurrying footsteps, etc. The list is almost endless.

These are probably the major ways in which music is used in radio drama. The professional would probably list many more—depending upon just how far he wanted to carry his efforts. He would say, for instance, that music is occasionally used in place of dialogue, as in Runyon Jones' one-sided conversation with the Harpy.⁸ Music may be used to clarify an idea, or to project a specific idea. (How many times has "Rock-a-bye Baby" been the basis of a bridge!) Music may be used to foreshorten time and space, and so on and on.

But no matter how the music is used in the radio play (and most of the following applies to sound, also), the following considerations must be taken into account.

The primary purpose of music and sound is to augment the dialogue. Except on certain very special occasions they should never intrude.

There should be, particularly in the music, a certain consistency

⁸ One-sided, that is, from the verbal point of view. Naturally the Harpy answered in musical language. How else would a Harpy speak? This delightful scene is found in *The Odyssey of Runyon Jones* (see footnote, p. 79).

and homogeneity. It would be right and proper to insert a pipe organ in a wedding scene, even though all the other music was orchestral. But it would be highly inartistic, most of the time, to mix brass bands, string ensembles, and symphony orchestras, each of which, adding insult to injury, has been recorded under different acoustical conditions.

Music and sound suggest, but they do not always suggest in the same degree. Thus, dependent upon other factors, such as type of show, amount of levity (or gravity), over-all tenor of production, and so on, music and sound vary in degree of suggestion even within the same show. The soft pastoral music under a woodland scene drops just the laziest kind of hint, while the music accompanying a battle sequence may assert itself much more positively. In the same scenes, crickets chirping in the first would add just a bit of flavor. The roaring of the battle in the second would have a very different, and much stronger, taste.

Finally, music and sound may be used either objectively or subjectively. We would expect, for instance, a difference in the *character* of the sound effects incorporated in *My Uncle Willy*, and *Fever in the Night* (see pp. 287 and 384). With these considerations in mind, let us complete this phase of our discussion by taking a look at sound effects.

SOUND EFFECTS ⁹

SOUND EFFECTS are most often used in radio drama in the following ways:

1. *To project, clarify, or heighten the action.*

Probably the simplest and most often used sound effect is that of the opening and closing of a door. But in even that simple act we are told two things: that a person is entering or leaving the room, and that he engages in this activity in a particular manner. There is all the difference in the world between the obsequious door closing of the butler and the

⁹ For a more detailed treatment of the majority of the points discussed here, see Albert Crews, *Radio Production Directing* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1944), pp. 125-35.

vehement slam of the wife-going-home-to-mother. The idea involved, of course, is present in the execution of nearly all sound effects.

2. *Set the scene or locale.*

What could more effectively assist in the presentation of a pastoral idyll than the soft tumbling of a stream in the background and the chirp of crickets a little closer at hand? Or give a better effect of a busy city street than a record of traffic sounds?

3. *Create or heighten the mood or atmosphere of the scene.*

If we are concerned with a scene laid in a long-deserted house, what could be more natural than the slow screech of rusty hinges preceding the bang of loose shutters, or the eerie passage of the wind under the eaves? In all kinds of ways, expected and unexpected, sound effects may be used to create and intensify the mood.

4. *Indicate entrances and exits.*

Footsteps arriving or departing and door sounds are the effects most generally used to indicate the arrival or departure of characters in the scene.

5. *Establish time.*

The chiming of a clock is, of course, a convention which is both widely used and widely accepted.

6. *As an opening and/or closing device.*

The most famous (presently, at any rate) is of course "Inner Sanctum's" squeaking door.

7. *To create unrealistic effects.*

In just one fantasy, *The Odyssey of Runyon Jones*, previously mentioned, some of the sound effects to be created included assorted tick-tocks, bells, and chimes for the scene laid in Father Time's workshop; the noise of the vernal equinox on Aldebaran; the soul of a wolf passing by "curgatorium." Fantasy, horror, and science fiction plays provide very fertile fields indeed for the imaginative use of sound.

8. *As bridges and transitions.*

Let us suppose, for instance, that our hero and heroine are

caught in a terrible storm. As one scene ends, the storm increases in violence, establishes dominance for a moment, then lessens in intensity and fades gradually under the new scene. Our natural conclusion would be that there had been a lapse of time involved.

9. *As a montage effect.*

Sound may be used as the "binder" in montages. For example, we hear a "rumor factory" in operation. Leading into and under the first lines is the sound of a speeding train, which changes to an automobile under the next short scene of the montage, and for succeeding scenes becomes a factory, a washing machine, and finally a teletype for the concluding episode in the montage.

10. *As an expository device.*

Sound may be used, naturally enough, to tell a story itself—or at least, part of a story. One of the most impressive sound sequences that I recall occurred in a battle scene in a "CBS Workshop" show. For fully a minute and a half the successive sounds of a battle were paraded before us. The story of the battle from its beginning to the final climax was so carefully executed that it was eminently credible as a series of actions within itself.

11. *To identify a particular character.*

Some of the best moments in the history of radio sound effects have occurred in the imaginative use of sound as a leitmotif. There was, to particularize, the toneless whistle of the murderer each time he moved in for the kill, the slithering rasp of the club-footed man; the clank of chains preceding each entry of the ghost; the skeletal rattle which faded on mike, then off for a particularly chilling effect; the tapping of the blind man's cane, which always preceded a death.

This then, is the radio play: a complex sound picture painted by the use of dialogue, music, sound effects, and silence—each artistically integrated with the others to produce the most vivid picture possible in the mind of the listener.

The analysis of radio drama

IN ORDER TO PRESENT a play on the air successfully, the actors and director must understand thoroughly the dramatic material with which they are working. The purpose of this chapter is to present a guide for analyzing the radio play. Analyze the play so that you can understand it, understand it so that you can communicate it.

Analysis is a tool—not an end in itself. Few, if any, plays are so perfectly constructed that they present no problems when a systematic analysis is attempted. Likewise, no single analytical scheme that will be wholly applicable to every play has ever been devised. Any approach toward artistic analysis is, by the very nature of its subject, bound to be deficient in some respects. The artistic spark that abounds in any good play is most elusive. The uniqueness of the great play tends to put it into a class by itself.

But the fact that certain aspects of a drama are difficult to pin down and analyze does not mean that no analysis should be attempted. It does mean that we should recognize the inherent limitations of a more or less mechanical approach to an artistic object. Nevertheless, a basic approach that is applicable to a goodly portion of drama on the air will enable us to gain a clearer understanding of what the play is all about. It will give us a guide on how to go about looking for what we need to know in order to present the play in the most effective manner.

One may ask, "Is not this analysis an intuitive thing?" The answer is, "To the experienced professional, yes—to a degree." It is more

or less intuitive because he has, through previous training and experience, arrived at a point where recognition of the play's dramatic qualities is second nature to him. But to attain that degree of intuitive comprehension, diligent and deliberate analyses of many plays form an excellent training ground.

The following method of analysis attempts to provide the beginning student of radio drama with a fairly complete, yet usable means for learning as much as possible about the play with which he is concerned. The material is primarily explanatory. The application of this analytic method is made in Chapter 6.

OUTLINE

To assist in correlating the contents of this chapter and to facilitate review, there follows an outline of the major topics.

- I. LENGTH
- II. PERIOD
- III. LITERARY TYPE
 - A. Tragedy
 - B. Melodrama
 - C. Comedy
 - D. Farce
 - E. Serious Drama
- IV. SUBJECT MATTER OR CONTENT
 - A. Historical
 - B. Biographical
 - C. Romantic
 - D. Domestic
 - E. Society
 - F. Social or Propaganda
- V. STYLE
 - A. Degree of Illusion
 - B. Traditional Styles
 - C. Experimental Styles
- VI. FACTUAL BASIS
 - A. Based on Fact
 - B. Based on Fiction
 - C. Fantasy
- VII. NUMBER OF DRAMATIC SEQUENCES
 - A. Major
 - B. Minor

- VIII. DEVELOPMENT
 - A. Plot
 - B. Episodic
 - C. Episodic Plot
- IX. TIME COVERED
- X. PREDOMINANT ELEMENT
 - A. Plot
 - B. Characters
 - C. Theme and Idea
 - D. Mood
 - E. Environment
 - F. Setting
 - G. Action
 - H. Rhythm
- XI. STRUCTURAL STYLE
 - A. Unit Play
 - B. Serial Drama
- XII. STRUCTURAL FORM
 - A. Conventional Drama
 - B. Dramatic Narrative
 - C. Documentary
 - D. Dramatic Monologue
 - E. Dramatic Sketch
 - F. Dramatized News
 - G. Dramatized Commercials
- XIII. PURPOSE
 - A. Entertain
 - B. Inform
 - C. Persuade
 - D. Combination
- XIV. INTENDED AUDIENCE
 - A. General Audiences
 - B. Specific Audiences

I. LENGTH

The length of the program has a direct relationship to the type and kind of drama which should be attempted, and to the treatment of the play. In any play characters must be presented and established, as must the setting and situation; and time must be allowed for the development of plot and action. Obviously, the limitation of length imposed upon the writer, actor, and director is

one which must be met. We must understand, therefore, how these limitations are met and overcome.

In order to illustrate how broadcast length affects the development of the radio play, there follow scene outlines and sample scenes from three different radio adaptations of the same play. The first is an hour version, the second is a half-hour version, and the third is a fifteen-minute version. The play is *La Dame aux Camélias*, by Alexandre Dumas fils. Popularly translated under the title *The Lady of the Camellias*, or, more simply, *Camille*, this play, which was adapted by Dumas from his earlier novel, has enjoyed tremendous popularity in the century since it was first produced (1852).

Camille is the story of a courtesan who was the toast of Paris, and of the provincial young man who loved her. Marguerite Gautier loved camellias. They were the only flowers she ever wore; so it was natural that she should be called Camille. Armand Duval loved her from afar. When he has the opportunity to meet her, he cannot help declaring his love for her. Camille, touched by his sincere protestations, allows him to become her lover, but refuses to marry him. But the continual orgies of her life in Paris tell upon her frail health. This, plus the fact that Camille has fallen in love with Armand, prompts her to forsake Paris and take a place in the country with Armand. There they live in happiness and contentment until news of Armand's affair comes to the ears of the small community in which Armand's family lives.

Armand's father visits him in Paris and tries unsuccessfully to persuade Armand to give up his mistress. M. Duval then visits Camille and tells her that the fiancé of Armand's sister has threatened to break the engagement unless Armand returns to a virtuous life. Camille agrees to leave Armand, for his sister's sake. She returns to Paris. Armand, believing that Camille has just grown tired of him and thus has proved that she never loved him, turns his back on her when they meet in Paris. But he continues to love her, even though she has returned to the life of a courtesan. Camille's sickness returns, and Armand hears she is near death. He rushes to her side, and they repledge their love. Camille tries to rise, to go

with Armand, but instead dies in his arms. With this brief summary of the story, let us return to the relationship between broadcast length and story and dialogue treatment.

Camille

ONE-HOUR RADIO VERSION

ADAPTED BY: Phillip Lewis

PRODUCED BY: "Theatre Guild
on the Air"

SPONSORED BY: U. S. Steel

BROADCAST BY: ABC, coast to coast, April 3, 1949

CHARACTERS

<i>Major</i> (3)	<i>Secondary</i> (4)	<i>Minor</i> (5)
Camille	Gaston, <i>friend to Armand</i>	Doorman
Armand	M. Duval, <i>Armand's</i>	Laroche } <i>Camille's</i>
Prudence,	<i>father</i>	Olympe } <i>friends</i>
<i>confidante</i>	De Varville, <i>French no-</i>	Second, <i>for</i>
<i>to Camille</i>	<i>bleman, one of Camille's</i>	<i>De Varville</i> *
	<i>"protectors"</i>	Coachman, <i>to</i>
	<i>Doctor, to Camille</i>	<i>Camille</i>

Scene Outline

Approximate playing time of scene, and characters involved, are enclosed in parentheses.

OPENING COMMERCIAL AND BILLBOARD (1:50) (*Program announcer and narrator*)

ACT I (23:10)

1. Street Scene (1:40) (*Armand, Camille, Doorman*) Introduces main characters, but does not relate them to each other.
2. Music Hall, Gaston's box (2:00) (*Armand, Gaston*) Armand sees Camille in box across way; asks Gaston to introduce him.
3. Music Hall, Camille's box (5:30) (*Camille, Armand, Gaston*) Armand is formally introduced to Camille by Gaston, who then bows out. Armand declares his love for Camille, who admits she "could love him," but resists impulse.
4. Camille's apartment (3:30) (*Camille, Prudence, Doctor*) Further introductions of characters. Reveals Camille is a courtesan, and her sickness is consumption.
5. Camille's carriage (3:30) (*Armand, Camille, Coachman*) Ar-

mand pursues suit, Camille admits that she loves him but fear of death keeps her from promising to marry him.

6. Camille's apartment (4:15) (*Camille, Prudence, Gaston, Laroche, De Varville*) Prudence berates Camille for loving Armand, inasmuch as the Comte de Varville is ready to assume her "protection." De Varville presents case. Camille undecided.
7. Camille's apartment, midnight, after the party (2:45) (*Camille, Armand*) Camille admits her love to Armand and goes to him. End of Act I.

COMMERCIAL, NET BREAK, AND PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION (3:15)
(*Program announcer, narrator, commercial announcer*)

ACT II (12:25) (All scenes laid in the cottage of Armand and Camille in the country)

1. Early summer (3:50) (*Camille, Armand, Prudence*) We learn of Armand's and Camille's happiness together. For the first time, Camille feels life worth living. Her health is much improved.
2. Late summer (5:40) (*Camille, M. Duval*) Having heard of his son's affair with Camille, M. Duval has come to try to persuade her to give up his son. Camille promises to do so.
3. The next day (2:55) (*Camille, Armand*) Camille breaks with Armand, tells him she is going back to Paris. End of Act II.

COMMERCIAL AND PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION (3:00) (*Program announcer, narrator, commercial announcer*)

ACT III (12:50)

1. Camille's chamber in De Varville's house (2:20) (*Camille, De Varville*) De Varville treats Camille wretchedly, and we see that her consumption is returning.
2. De Varville's ballroom, party scene (3:25) (*Prudence, Olympe, Laroche, De Varville, Armand*) Armand meets and insults De Varville, who vows revenge.
3. Camille's lodging (6:10) (*Prudence, Camille, Armand*) Prudence tries to comfort Camille, who is dying. Armand comes, begs Camille's forgiveness. Camille tries to arise and dress to go with him, dies in his arms.
4. Dueling field (0:55) (*De Varville and his second*) Armand and De Varville have just dueled. Armand died without raising his weapon. "It was his victory," says De Varville. "They are together again." End of play. (This scene not in original play.)

CLOSING CREDITS (0:40) (*Program announcer*)

TRAILER (0:40) (*Narrator*)

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT for Cancer Fund (0:35) (*By Joan Fontaine, who played Camille*)

CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENTS (1:00) (*Program announcer*)

Camille

ONE-HALF HOUR RADIO VERSION

ADAPTED BY: Lowell Johnson

PRODUCED BY: the Northwestern
University "Radio Playshop"

BROADCAST BY: WIND, Chicago,
April 14, 1946.

CHARACTERS

Major (3)

Camille

Armand

Prudence

Secondary (2)

Gaston

M. Duval

Minor (5)

Man

Servant, to man

Nanine, servant to

Camille

de Nancourt, would-be

admirer of Camille

Messenger

Scene Outline

OPENING AND INTRODUCTION TO PLAY (1:15) (*Program announcer*)

(There is no middle break. Playing time of body of play, 26:45)

1. Man's apartment (2:50) (*Man, servant, Armand*) Armand comes to reclaim book he has given to Camille, which man has bought at auction of her possessions after her death. Armand tells him the story of Camille.
2. Lobby of music hall (1:42) (*Gaston, Armand, Camille*) Armand persuades Gaston to introduce him to Camille.
3. Music hall, Gaston's box (1:20) (*Gaston, Armand, Prudence*) Exposition. Camille's status as famed courtesan, told by Prudence, her friend and confidante.
4. Carriage after opera (2:23) (*Gaston, Armand, Prudence*) Gaston and Armand persuade Prudence to take them to Camille's apartment that evening.
5. Camille's apartment (4:00) (*Armand, Camille, Prudence, Gaston, de Nancourt*) Armand is introduced to Camille's gay life. Camille seized with coughing spell, retreats to boudoir, followed by Armand.

6. Camille's boudoir (4:00) (*Armand, Camille*) Armand senses Camille's loneliness, is horrified to learn of her illness (consumption). Armand declares his love. Camille, seeing the specter of death, refuses it.
7. River gardens on bank of Seine (1:00) (*Armand, Camille*) Armand and Camille decide on a life together (though Camille refuses to marry him). They plan a small house in the country away from Paris.
8. Country house (1:00) (*Camille, Armand*) Armand and Camille now settled and happy.
9. Country house (1:00) (*Camille, Armand*) End of summer. Lovers are idyllic in happiness, Camille getting over her sickness.
10. Country house (1:00) (*Armand, Camille, Nanine, Messenger*) Camille has premonition of danger, messenger arrives to tell Armand his father wishes to speak to him in the city.
11. Country house (3:30) (*Camille, M. Duval*) Armand's father has tricked Armand to get him out of the house so he can speak to Camille in private. He asks her to give Armand up, for sake of his sister. She reluctantly agrees.
12. Man's apartment, same as Act I, Scene 1 (3:00) (*Armand, Man*) Armand finishes his story of Camille by reading to the man Camille's last letter to him. Cross fade to Camille for the letter giving additional punch for ending. End of play.

CREDITS, TRAILER, AND CLOSING (1:30) (*Program announcer*)

Camille

ONE-QUARTER HOUR RADIO VERSION

ADAPTED BY: Joe V. Murphy

PRODUCED BY: Radio House,
The University of Texas

BROADCAST BY: Texas State Network,
March 9, 1948

CHARACTERS

Major (2)

Armand

Camille

Secondary (2)

Narrator

M. Duval

NOTE: Because of the extremely short playing time (13:45), a narrator was used for exposition and bridging the selected scenes. He was an intrinsic part of the play, and thus is included as a secondary character. There was no division into acts, either actual or indicated.

Scene Outline

OPENING AND INTRODUCTION TO PLAY (1:30) (*Program announcer, narrator*)

1. Camille's boudoir (1:30) (*Armand, Camille*) declare their love for each other.
2. Soliloquy (1:30) (*Camille*) examining her love for Armand and desire to be with him.
3. Country house (2:15) (*Camille, M. Duval*) M. Duval entreats Camille to give up Armand. She reluctantly agrees when she realizes it means his sister's happiness.
4. Paris salon (2:00) (*Armand, Camille*) Armand implores Camille to return to him, but she, mindful of her promise to M. Duval, refuses.
5. Camille's lodgings (4:00) (*Armand, Camille*) Armand, having heard of Camille's great sickness, rushes to her side. They repledge their love for each other, but as Camille attempts to rise to go with Armand she dies in his arms. End of play.

CREDITS AND CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENTS (1:00) (*Narrator, program announcer*)

In Summary:

Characters.

"Theater Guild" (48:25)	"Radio Playshop" (26:45)	Radio House (11:15)
Major 3	Major 3	Major 2
Secondary 4	Secondary 2	Secondary 2
Minor 5	Minor 5	
Total $\overline{12}$	Total $\overline{10}$	Total $\overline{4}$

The characters of Camille and Armand are developed in the first scenes of each of the two longer adaptations. In the first scene of the "Theatre Guild" show the characters are just introduced. They are subsequently given some body in the second and third scenes and are quite completely developed in later scenes. In the "Playshop" version the first scene follows the novel a little more closely than the first version does. It is perhaps slower in opening, and the character of Armand is more completely set than is that of Camille. It is not until the second scene that we are given many details of

Camille, and we do not meet her until the third. In the Radio House adaptation, shortest of the three, the narrator briefly introduces Armand and Camille (taking about 1 minute) and the action is well developed by the time the first scene opens.

Scenes. There is a total of 14 scenes in the hour version, 12 in the half-hour version, and 5 in the quarter-hour version of the play. There is a seeming discrepancy in the number of scenes in the first two, but in the second, the first three scenes of the second act are quite short (1 minute each) and are welded together in a kind of montage. Together they equal just one full-length scene, thus making the actual difference 14 to 10, a more justifiable proportion.

The "Theatre Guild" show attempts to present the whole play, the "Playshop" adaptation is a more literary attempt to present the idea of the novel, and the Radio House show was designed merely to give the listener a taste of the play and arouse his interest in it.

In order to show how individual scenes were developed in each of these adaptations there follow the three versions of the scene between Camille and M. Duval, Armand's father. The first scene is taken from the one-hour version by the "Theatre Guild," the second from the half-hour version by the "Radio Playshop," and the third is from the quarter-hour version by Radio House.

From the "Theatre Guild" Show

MUSIC: *Transition.*

SOUND: *A bell tinkles.*

CAMILLE: (*Off—happily.*) Just a moment—I'm coming.

SOUND: *Quick footsteps. Door opens.*

CAMILLE: (*On mike.*) Oh—Good afternoon.

DUVAL: Good afternoon. . . .

CAMILLE: Can I help you, M'sieur?

DUVAL: I hope I have the pleasure of speaking to Marguerite Gautier?

CAMILLE: Yes.

DUVAL: And I am told you are often called Camille.

- CAMILLE: That is true.
- DUVAL: Permit me to introduce myself. I am M. Duval.
- CAMILLE: Armand's father? But I should have known—he resembles you very much! Please—come in.
- SOUND: *Door closes.*
- DUVAL: Thank you.
- CAMILLE: I'm very surprised and very happy to see you. I'm sorry but Armand isn't here, M. Duval, he is in Paris. Won't you sit down?
- DUVAL: Thank you. I should like to talk to you. You see, Armand won't be here immediately.
- CAMILLE: I beg your pardon?
- DUVAL: He is waiting for me now at my hotel in Paris. We had an appointment to meet at this hour.
- CAMILLE: I don't understand.
- DUVAL: That is how it seemed best to arrange it so that you and I would be alone, Mam'selle.
- CAMILLE: Without Armand?
- DUVAL: Without Armand.
- CAMILLE: But I shall tell him you were here.
- DUVAL: If you wish—perhaps. First let me explain why I *am* here. It has been only recently that I have learned the true nature of my son's infatuation.
- CAMILLE: Which we, Monsieur, call love.
- DUVAL: Now that I have met you, I can at least approve my son's taste in beauty.
- CAMILLE: Thank you.
- DUVAL: But my dear young lady, will you bear with me? There is a difference between love and passion. Love, true love, does not destroy happiness, it creates it.
- CAMILLE: Then I am confident, Monsieur, of our love. Your son has told me this summer has brought him the greatest happiness of his life.
- DUVAL: I can see, Mademoiselle, that the summer has been most idyllic. Now the summer is ending. Are you aware

that to continue to pay for this interlude, my son is now proposing to ruin himself?

CAMILLE: No, I am not aware of that.

DUVAL: Has he led you to believe that he is rich? How do you think he has paid for this?

CAMILLE: M. Duval, when I left Paris, I abandoned most of what I possessed. I chose to do it. But of what I had left, I have sold it bit by bit. . . .

DUVAL: Are you telling me my son has sunk so low as to live on your bounty?

CAMILLE: He doesn't know, M'sieur, believe me! So what does it matter?

DUVAL: It matters because I have learned indirectly that Armand is attempting to sell his share of his mother's estate.

CAMILLE: No! But I wouldn't let him do that.

DUVAL: I *won't* let him.

CAMILLE: It won't be necessary, do you understand! I will do anything, do you hear—anything for him.

DUVAL: My dear child, I believe you would. Let me tell you—I had come here to plead for Armand. But now I feel it is almost my greater duty to protect *you*—from yourself.

CAMILLE: That's very kind. How can you protect me from happiness?

DUVAL: How strange that someone like you should actually know so little of the world. Here you stand, without the protection of society, the church, or a family. Suppose, when you are no longer beautiful, my son should forsake you? That would not be unusual. And society would approve.

CAMILLE: I seem to have a much better opinion of Armand, M. Duval, than you have—although I doubt if that is your true opinion of your son. So I am not frightened.

DUVAL: To that extent, you're very wise. It is I who am frightened. For Armand is loyal and that is what will ruin him.

CAMILLE: Why?

DUVAL: First there will be the remorse he must feel when he has broken his sister's heart. Have you heard that she is now engaged to a most proper young man?

CAMILLE: No. I did not know.

DUVAL: She has been dreaming of a home and children. Now the young man's family has heard of this affair and of you. They are horrified. So even if I were to stand by your side, can you ask these young people to share the burden of this scandal?

CAMILLE: M. Duval, let me tell you, you don't know how often my days have been made hideous with regret for the past. But it is the past and now Armand loves me as I love him. Is his happiness to be ruined because people refuse to understand?

DUVAL: I admire your courage, your defiance, but that won't build a future. This affair can have none, it never could.

CAMILLE: Please don't say that. Why? Why do you?

DUVAL: Soon neither of you will have any money. Armand will have sacrificed his career. People less kind than you but with more of what *they* call virtue will make you an outcast. And Armand, with his loyalty, will share this cross. And that, Camille, is precisely what your love for my son will bring him.

CAMILLE: No!

DUVAL: In what way have I not spoken the truth?

CAMILLE: It may be true but—

DUVAL: My only hope is that you *do* love him. Then you will see that you must let him go.

CAMILLE: No.

DUVAL: If you love him for his sake, you must *make* him go.

CAMILLE: But how could I explain to Armand?

DUVAL: You never can, my dear.

CAMILLE: But he must understand!

DUVAL: You mean you wish to explain to him your sacrifice? My dear child, aren't you saying that you only wish to make him love you more?

- CAMILLE: But please—!
- DUVAL: There is nothing to ask of me, my child. If you love him, you will want to save him. . . . And you will find the way. If you love him.
- CAMILLE: More than my own life.
- DUVAL: Then—?
- CAMILLE: I can see—this is the end. . . .
- MUSIC: *Transition.*

From the "Radio Playshop" Show

- MUSIC: *Dramatic swell to end on a minor tone.*
- SOUND: *Knock on door, door opens.*
- CAMILLE: Yes. Oh.
- DUVAL: Are you Mlle. Gautier?
- CAMILLE: Yes.
- DUVAL: Here is my card.
- CAMILLE: "M. Duval."
- DUVAL: Yes.—I am Armand's father.
- CAMILLE: But Armand has gone to Paris.
- DUVAL: I know that. It is you I wish to see. May I come in?
- CAMILLE: Yes.
- DUVAL: You are typical! Exactly what I expected to find. All of this luxury. All of these . . . donations! How my son has stooped so, I shall never understand. How he could fall in love with a woman such as you. . . . And you, in the manner of your kind, pretending to be in love with him!
- CAMILLE: M'sieur Duval. I don't think you quite understand.
- DUVAL: Understand! Ach! You have the insolence to stand there before me and challenge!
- CAMILLE: M. Duval! Let me remind you that you are in my house. I have no need to render you an account of my life, except insofar as the sincerity of my love for your son.
- DUVAL: Then you are in love with him.

CAMILLE: Yes.

DUVAL: That makes it more difficult. You are very beautiful, Madame.

CAMILLE: Thank you.

DUVAL: But regardless of how beautiful you are, I cannot afford to let you ruin the future of my son, by the expenditure which you are causing.

CAMILLE: If it is money which is the trouble, M'sieur Duval, let me show you. (*Fade.*) Here in this box on the table are pawn tickets, (*Fade on.*) receipts from people who bought all the rest of my cherished possessions. I have already made arrangements to sell this furniture and to live with Armand in the simplest way. M. Duval, Armand and I have been very happy. He has been most kind and gentle. He has shown me the possibility of a quieter and happier life, and has brought me to the real understanding of love.

DUVAL: Forgive me, Madame. Then it is not by threats, but by begging, that I must ask you to make an even greater sacrifice for my son.

CAMILLE: M'sieur. . .

DUVAL: My child, do not take what I have to say amiss. Only remember that there are sometimes cruelties in life which must be accepted.

CAMILLE: Go on.

DUVAL: You are good, your soul has generosity unknown to many women who perhaps despise you, and are themselves less worthy. . . Marguerite, I have a daughter, young, beautiful, pure as an angel. She loves, and she too has made this love the dream of her life. My daughter is about to marry the man whom she loves. He comes from an honorable family which requires that mine be no less honorable. This man's family has learned what manner of life Armand is leading in Paris and has declared that . . .

CAMILLE: (*Cries.*) Stop! (*Sobs.*) I understand. . . (*Gains control.*) M'sieur Duval, do you believe that I love your son?

DUVAL: Yes.

- CAMILLE: Do you believe that I made this love the hope, the dream, the forgiveness of my life?
- DUVAL: Completely.
- CAMILLE: (*Pause.*) Within a week your son will once more be at your side.
- DUVAL: I fear that you'll have no influence upon his feelings.
- CAMILLE: Be at rest. He will hate me.
- MUSIC: *Transition.*

From the Radio House Show

- NARRATOR: But one day, while Armand has gone up to town, Camille is visited by his father and is horrified when she realizes that she is being asked to leave Armand.
- CAMILLE: Oh, you could not ask me to part from Armand forever . . . you would not!
- DUVAL: You must!
- CAMILLE: You do not know how we love each other. I am alone in the world, without friends, relatives, family. (*She coughs.*) My life is entwined in his. I have but a few years to live. To leave Armand would kill me at once.
- DUVAL: You will not die until to die will be happiness. You think you love him now, but are you so sure you will continue to love him?
- CAMILLE: Believe me, Monsieur Duval, I have never loved before, and I shall never love again. I feel it. I know it.
- DUVAL: But you may deceive yourself . . . or, what is more likely, Armand may deceive himself.
- CAMILLE: (*Afraid.*) Oh, no!
- DUVAL: At your age one cannot count on the future. Can you be sure that the first wrinkle on your brow will not draw the veil from Armand's eyes?
- CAMILLE: My dream is passed! Why have I outlived it?
- DUVAL: If what I have said seems cruel to you, forgive me.
- CAMILLE: What you have said to me, Monsieur Duval, my own heart has many times tried to whisper . . . but one can escape listening to one's self. I have had to listen to

you. You have asked for a sacrifice in the names of Armand and his sister. Some day will you tell your pure young daughter that I took my heart in my own hands and crushed it for her sake . . . for I have crushed it, monsieur, and I shall die. (*She cries.*)

DUVAL: Poor child! Poor child!

CAMILLE: You pity me, monsieur. You weep for me. Thank you for those tears—they have made me strong. Very well, monsieur. I swear that your son will return to you.

DUVAL: You are a noble girl, and yet I fear—

CAMILLE: Fear nothing. He will hate me—I shall teach him to despise me.

MUSIC: *Arresting and under.*

NARRATOR: Camille keeps her word to Armand's father. She returns to Paris and to the Comte De Varville, a former admirer . . . when she next sees Armand at a salon in Paris, she begs him to leave. . . .

A careful comparison of the above scenes with each other and with the original play shows that the "Theatre Guild" version is developed more along the lines of the original. M. Duval's distaste at his son's indiscretion is brought out, and the emphasis is placed upon the impropriety of their lives. The clinching argument, that of the threatened dissolution of Armand's sister's engagement, is given little space—probably not as much as the original justifies. The "Playshop" adaptation is adequate on that score, but does not show why Camille could not give Armand up only until his sister was married. The Radio House script has time merely to state the existence of a problem. There is no time for motivation. Each in its own way provides the motivation which leads to the crisis of the play, the estrangement of Armand and Camille. Thus we see that the program length influences the scope and treatment of an adaptation quite as much as it does the original play for radio.

II. PERIOD

Many of the plays aired are contemporary, but often (especially in the longer originals and adaptations) the play may be laid in a

setting far removed in time from the present. When such a play is being produced, these factors must be understood:

The mores of the time of the play were different from those of today.
However,

The audience is a contemporary audience, and the play must be slanted toward them for maximum communication. But,

There should not be so much slanting as to lose the flavor of the period.

III. LITERARY STYLE ¹

The director and actor can interpret to a higher degree the wishes of the writer when they understand what he is trying to do. Many plays do not, however, slip easily into a category. A play may have elements of serious drama with comedy overtones, or it may be a comedy with overtones of serious drama. Or it may be a comedy with many farcical elements, etc. At any rate most well-written plays have predominant dramaturgical elements which place them in a particular literary category.

A. *Tragedy*

"A tragedy is a play in which the treatment is serious, profound, and lofty, and the ending is both disastrous and inevitable."² The player approaches tragedy with the realization that his treatment must be in a serious vein, for here is a significant struggle between two great opposing forces. The subject is never frivolous; the theme is serious; the characterizations are well developed.

The tragic hero is usually an important person, and is usually an individual (Oedipus, Macbeth) though a group may be a collective hero (The Weavers). A tragic ending is a foregone conclusion; indeed, this phrase "foregone conclusion" typifies the tragedy. We are certain that the ending will find our protagonist dead, or completely unhappy with no hope of regaining happiness.

¹ In this section no attempt is made to approach in detail those aspects of dramaturgy which are easily accessible from other sources, many of which are indicated in the bibliography. The material here is more in the nature of a guide and a review of the fundamentals.

² Bruce Carpenter, *The Way of Drama* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1929), p. 36.

1. *Classical tragedy* is the term used to designate those tragedies which are in the tradition of the ancient Greeks or Romans. They may be the actual ancient tragedies themselves, or more modern tragedies based upon classical tragic figures, and developed in the classical manner.

2. *Romantic tragedy* does not conform to the strict style and development of the classical tragedy. It allows for greater freedom of expression, and a wider scope of theme. The characters are generally more completely developed than in most classical tragedies, and the play may contain seemingly humorous characters and scenes.

3. *Domestic tragedy* is the latest development of genuinely tragic drama. Domestic tragedies were first written in England in the early part of the seventeenth century, and, with Ibsen's assistance, achieved maturity toward the end of the nineteenth century.

In some respects, the "serious drama" which will be mentioned later may be compared to domestic tragedy. It might not be too daring to say that serious drama, as we know it, is a kind of "watered down" tragedy. The necessity for popularizing the approach and treatment of serious themes in order to communicate effectively to an audience ever growing in size and diversity of background dictated this change. Domestic tragedy—of a type—is the kind of tragedy with which the radio player is usually most familiar.

Except when used in an occasional prestige show or educational series, tragedy is seldom presented on the air.

B. *Melodrama*

From the point of view of the professional radio player, melodramas are too often maligned. True, melodrama has neither the emotional depth of tragedy, nor the intellectual depth of comedy, and its attributes tend toward the broad and sensational; but this does not automatically make all melodrama cheap. There is no necessity here to enter into controversy as to the relative merits of melodrama. From the pragmatic point of view melodrama is one of the more effective means of reaching a broad general audience.

It is extremely difficult to give a concise definition of melodrama, for there is quite a gap between those at either end of the scale.

Let us look at some of the characteristics of melodramas as a class. Melodramas generally have some or most of the following characteristics:

Plot and action. Plot is the most important consideration in melodrama, dominating all other aspects. Because the aim of melodrama is to excite the audience and provide it with vicarious thrills, the action is swift moving and rises to unnatural and exaggerated heights in what should be minor climaxes. Generally the theme is of a rather serious nature, with comic bits interspersed as relief from the dramatic tension. Action (or perhaps "activity" is a better word when speaking of melodrama) comes out of the plot, not vice versa as is often the case in good tragedy or comedy. Like the ringmaster in a circus, the writer or director of a melodrama must provide plenty of action, keeping the audience progressively conscious of new and greater thrills to come. Action crowds upon action, thrill upon thrill, until the audience is mentally and emotionally saturated. Most of the action is external, and in even the best written melodramas, most of it seems contrived when the play is analyzed. But at the time of presentation, it seems very real to the audience.

Characters. Character development takes the back seat in most melodramas. Characters are subordinate to the plot. The characters are generally quite vivid, but they are often static. Characterizations are set at the beginning of the play (or on the entrance of the character) and there is usually little deviation throughout the whole of the play.

Since the story is often developed by circumstance and machinery, the characters need not worry about their motivations; those are provided for them. They need only to act in their pre-ordained fashion. The leading characters of a melodrama possess obvious virtues and/or vices. The smaller players are generally stock characters. If the listener had time to think about the play as it was being done, he probably would sense the artificiality of the characters and of the artificially contrived and resolved problems which they so gracefully manage to hurdle by the skin of their teeth in the last act. The hero and heroine need never fear, however, for the fast action and dialogue keep the listener from thinking. Virtue is

always rewarded, vice is always punished; the ending is happy, and the listener is satisfied.

Dialogue. In describing dialogue in a melodrama it is not so easy to be specific as it is when describing plot and characters. Generally we may say that the dialogue reflects the fast action of the plot and the "rudimentary moral divergencies" of the characters. But although the style of plotting has changed very little throughout the years, and the evolution of the type characters has been gradual, the dialogue has undergone a transformation. Comparison of merely the relative length of the speeches in today's melodramas with those of a few decades ago will graphically illustrate the difference. Shorter speeches and innuendo are much more the rule nowadays.

In summary, we can say that "Everybody likes a story." And that is what your melodrama is—a story, developed sensationally. The story is told for the sake of the story and is designed just to be an interesting diversion, not a play which will have a lasting effect on the audience.

1. *Straight melodrama.* Many of the ordinary, run-of-the-mill plays for radio fall into this category. These are the shows where boy meets-loses-gets girl in twenty-five minutes, or where man separates from, falls back in love with, is reunited with spouse—in the same amount of time. While this type of play may be classified as a melodrama, it usually employs the least of the melodramatic elements. The action and thrills of a mystery or adventure melodrama are lacking; and what we are forced to classify as melodrama (because of the approach) is merely "souped-up" sentimental comedy.

2. *Mystery melodrama.* No one who saw *The Bat* or listened to "Lights Out" will soon forget the thrills and chills engendered by these masterpieces of mystery melodrama at its best. Radio provides a wonderful medium for the true mystery melodrama. The listener can, in his mind, conjure up all kinds of imaginative responses to weird or mysterious sounds. The stealthy footfalls of the monster about to strike, the stinger which accents the woman's transformation into a cat, the scream of the terrified victim as the werewolf leaps—need we go on? It does seem too bad that many of the fine

mystery melodramas have been replaced with pseudo-psychological pieces and run-of-the-mill whodunits.

3. *Adventure melodrama*. An adventure melodrama was once described as a heroic drama cut down to tuppenny size. The elements of mystery or detective melodrama may be (and often are) present, but the foreign element usually enters in. An adventure melodrama laid in Washington, D. C., might feature a beautiful refugee or spy. In San Francisco you may be certain to hear an Oriental accent. In New York, our hero may be embroiled in a plot masterminded by a person of indeterminate but definitely guttural origin.

It is in the foreign clime that adventure melodrama reaches its heights. The regions remote from our experiences achieve a glamor which their natives would never recognize. The reason for the preference for these alien places is a simple one. To the ordinary listener even the most unnatural phenomena seem possible, and the artificial solutions or contrived endings take on added credibility because of the unfamiliar territory and peoples involved.

4. *Comedy melodramas and farce melodramas*. Most melodramas contain comic elements, secondary to the action and plot. These are used in the main for relief, as contrast or variety. Sometimes, however, the plot is based on true comedy or farce, and the thrills and chills assume the subordinate position. When such is the case we have a comedy (or a farce) melodrama.

C. *Comedy*

Comedy embodies a variety of different forms ranging from the laugh-provoking to the tear-jerking. Like the famed elephant that was approached and described so differently by the blind men, comedy may seem to be a number of different things, yet there are certain elements which are common to most comedies.

Plot. Comedies generally have rather sustained, closely knit plots which attempt honestly to fulfill the Aristotelian concept of "beginning, middle, and end." Comedies generally end more or less happily—happily in that the protagonists achieve all or the greater majority of their goals, overcome the more important obstacles, and emerge from the conflict with brows unsullied. A witty ending

is usually desirable, but not necessary, for the closing scenes may end on a note of hope, rather than humor.

Characters. Keeping in mind that comedy is a lighter form of drama, the actor remembers that his character comments with less intensity. His (the character's) study of life is less profound than his contemporary's in a serious drama or a tragedy.

Approach. Comedy has been defined as "a point of view."³ With this definition we come to the crux of comedy, for there may be but a hair's difference between the satirical comedy and the serious drama; the thinnest line of demarcation between a comedy of wit or manners and farce.

The following quotation lucidly presents the problem of approach.

... Comedy, shall I say, is the sparkle on the water, not the depths beneath: the gay surface, the glint of sunlight—any other pretty metaphor. But note, the waters must run deep underneath. In other words, comedy must be founded on truth and on understanding of the real value of a character before it can pick out the high-lights. It is only when one thoroughly understands a person that one can afford to laugh at him.

And here I would stipulate another quality that I find indispensable to the comic spirit—that of good nature. I am aware that this is a debatable point and that it may well be a personal idiosyncrasy of my own, but to me comedy is inextricably bound up with kindliness. As soon as a comment on character is inspired by contempt or anger it becomes tragic and loses the light of laughter. Irony, satire even, must be charitable and compassionate at heart or they stray into the realm of serious comment.⁴

Listed below are the principal types of comedy. In some the primary appeal is intellectual; in others, it is emotional. Intellectually or emotionally, comedy is a study in contrasts and incongruity. It is a highly planned and articulate style, not a *mélange*. A hodge-podge of ideas may result in a hilarious situation, but it is more likely to leave the listener mentally gasping for breath.

³ Athene Seyler and Stephen Haggard, *The Craft of Comedy* (New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1946), p. 9.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

1. *Comic elements.* High and low comedy refer to the style of the comic elements of the play. High comedy appeals to the intellect and arouses what George Meredith termed "thoughtful laughter." Contrasted to the belly-laugh aimed at by low comedy, high comedy attempts to exhibit the inconsistencies and incongruities of human nature by merely pointing them out in a witty manner, and leaving the follow-up to the audience.

Low comedy, on the other hand, makes a sometimes obvious effort to digest the comedy elements in advance, spoonfeeding the results to the audience. Low comedy may have some intellectual appeal but it usually lacks subtlety in "putting across" its laughs. Characteristic of low comedy are boisterous conduct, clowning, burlesque, and the like.

Comedy elements, like most other phenomena, are seldom pure white or pure black, i.e., high or low. The predominant comic elements in a play tend toward one or the other, and thus the player recognizes the stress and formulates his approach.

2. *Comedy of situation.* This type of comedy embroils its type characters in a ludicrous or incongruous situation and employs many low comedy devices in developing the action. Plots within plots, mistaken identities and contrived occurrences are common. Comedies of situation often verge on farce.

3. *Sentimental comedy.* Sentimental comedy may sometimes be mistaken for melodrama, for some of its characteristics—spotless hero and jet black villain, triumph of virtue, happy ending—it obtains from that source. But sentimental comedy lacks the dynamic quality, the spirit, the verve, of good melodrama. And it lacks the lightness of touch of the "better" comedy. Domestic trials and tribulations are displayed to the public and dirty linen is aired amid much emotion, all intended to let the listener identify himself with the protagonists and share the reward of joy and happiness at the end. This is comedy—nay, drama—at its weakest, and unfortunately it has represented much of the total dramatic offering of radio, especially daytime radio.

4. *Romantic comedy.* Romantic comedy is a much stronger type than sentimental comedy. Occasionally the two are confused, for

they have some common properties. Each may have a romantic theme; each ends happily. But romantic comedy, being much stronger in its construction, can stand alone in the field of literature, while sentimental comedy is often dependent upon the whims of a particular audience. To illustrate: *As You Like It* has been a favorite with audiences for several centuries. Who in the year 2050 will stage a revival of "Ma Perkins"?

Romantic comedy generally employs an idyllic background and builds up a strong concern in the mind of the listener for the lovers, who are subjected to many difficulties before the final happy ending.

5. *Comedy of character*. When the comic elements are motivated by peculiar characteristics of a particular person, or group, we have character comedy. Comedies of Jonson in the sixteenth century (comedy of humors) and Moliere's high comedy have been tagged by many critics and scholars as comedy of character. In the modern idiom we are more likely to think of character comedy in terms of *Harvey*, *Life with Father*, "Fibber McGee and Molly," and "Life of Riley." There are many comedy shows on the radio that seem to combine rather completely character and situation comedy. To the two mentioned above might be added "Amos 'n Andy," "A Date with Judy," "The Great Gildersleeve," and others.

6. *Realistic or Satiric comedy*. These comedies, being highly selective, must and do make comments upon the people and the times—comments that may assume the proportions of barbed shafts and be directed at ideological mores as well as customs and conventions. When these barbs are sharp and aimed at a specific target, the comedy may take on the garb of satire. Satirical comedy ridicules the foibles of contemporary customs and ideas, but ridicules it in a rather light vein, using a deft but probing touch. We are all familiar with such masterpieces as Shaw's *The Doctor's Dilemma*. And though there are occasionally radio adaptations of these recognized pieces of dramatic literature, seldom, if ever, do we hear original dramatic works on the radio which employ barbed wit aimed at a particular segment of the population. The reason: constant pressure from organized groups to prevent being the objects of such satire. Sponsors seldom buy radio time merely to enlighten

the populace. They invest in radio as an advertising medium, and cannot, therefore, afford to offend large and vocal segments of their audience.

The small amount of satire which is written especially for radio usually comes under the classification of "gentle spoofing," a tolerant and even pleasant ribbing of a particular facet of public opinion or thought. An excellent example of this type of gentle satire was the Columbia Workshop's unforgettable *Tortilla Jones*, which effectively satirized today's melodramas, yet treated this potentially touchy subject with such charm and finesse that no one could possibly be offended, even though every broadcaster of kid shows, every publisher of comics, and every producer of western and adventure movies could see the finger wagging derisively in his direction. It is in this type of satire that radio can excel.⁵

7. *Comedy of manners.* Allied in some respects to satiric comedy, comedy of manners is different in that it strikes out at a particular segment of society—a highly polished, artificial, sophisticated group such as that which is currently labeled as cafe society. The satire is usually implied, and not direct.

Brilliant and polished dialogue, involved plots (secondary to the dialogue, however) and an appeal to the intellect mark the truly good comedy of manners presented for a limited audience, which means that seldom do we hear original radio scripts of this comedy type. A pseudo comedy of manners, however, is occasionally broadcast. In these the dialogue, though perhaps witty and sparkling, is punched harder, and more emphasis is placed on the plot.

D. *Farce*

John Gassner puts it nicely when he calls farce a play in which we have "...laughter for the sake of laughter." Many of the current radio dramatic offerings are of a farcical nature, operating on a format of "strictly for the laughs." Broadly exaggerated characters and situations, much physical activity, a preponderance of low

⁵ Particular recognition should be awarded Fred Allen and Henry Morgan, radio's master satirists. Their ability deftly to deflate our stuffed shirts is masterful. They operate, however, not in a straight dramatic format, but in a comedy-variety format which often tempers what would otherwise be a rather savage thrust.

comedy devices (gross incongruities, coarse wit, horseplay), and a light and nonsensical approach to the presentation—these are some of the things which go into the makeup of a farce. The sole aim is to provide a source of immediate entertainment and laughter which demands no particular thought on the part of the audience for its appreciation.

Farce is the least subtle of dramatic types, inducing audience laughter by the most primitive methods. How many times have you heard on the radio a variant of this gag: Comedian, after the laying of a particularly heavy egg, "Oh well, the sponsor can't say I didn't try," or "Could it be that last line wasn't as funny as we thought it was? Let's take it over again just to make sure." These devices seldom fail to provoke laughter, and this kind of line, which started out as an ad lib cover-up, now is often placed in the script as a regular part of the gag. Indeed, this kind of heavy-handed approach is typical of the methods used to get farce across. Don't misunderstand. Though farce has been labeled by some critics as "dishonest comedy," it is as difficult to play good farce as it is serious comedy. Perhaps even more so, for pacing and timing, so important in farce, can seldom be quickly taught. It is developed—over a long period of time.

It is usually said that in farce, plot is of primary importance, with characters secondary. This is true, but it must be kept in mind that the characters must be well set in the minds of the audience. Some use of stock, stereotyped, or simplified characters is certainly permissible and often necessary, for the audience must have well in mind the type of characters before the plot is apparent.

The approach to the play may in some cases determine whether it is to end up as farce or comedy. It has become increasingly popular among writers on the theatre to use Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* as an example of farce. As originally written, there seems no doubt that Wilde gave us a brilliantly witty, lightly satiric commentary on some of the Victorian conventions of his time. His inclusion of many broad and exaggerated characters and situations, the violent gymnastics (more of which, however, were mental rather than physical), the complex plot—these are interpreted now as evi-

dences of a predominant element of farce; whereas before, the definitely strong characters, the polished brilliance of the writing, and the satire were strongly indicative of comedy of manners. The trend toward the simpler types of drama has probably caused these farcical elements to be accented in recent presentation and to call attention to themselves. *The Importance of Being Earnest* may be played either as a farce or a comedy, and the approach is the determining factor.

Farce is strongly represented on the airwaves. "My Friend Irma" and "Henry Aldrich" are prime examples of farce in a unit setting of their own. The primary importance to the average radio player in understanding the potentialities of farce lies in the fact that incorporated into most radio comedies are some elements of farce, and these bits, placed at strategic, attention-getting points by the skilled radio writer, serve to "spice up" the show. The player who does not recognize these bits, or who handles them clumsily, is neither obtaining the maximum personal satisfaction from his part, nor communicating the maximum possible drama to his audience.

E. *Serious Drama*

Serious drama is just what the name implies—drama which is neither frivolous nor tragic. It requires the audience to do some thinking, some judging, some evaluating. The characters lack the heroic stature of tragic characters, and generally (though not always) the ending resolves the problem or suggests a strong and amiable solution.

In serious drama the appeal to logic is often predominant. This is not to say that the author does not attempt emotional empathy or suasion. On the direct contrary, this is often used on a broad and even melodramatic scale. But unlike melodrama, a passing and non-durable affair, serious drama is approached and presented with the idea of semi-permanent impression upon the audience. Of serious drama, John Gassner has noted:

... The kinship with tragedy is apparent ... in the serious approach and in some perception of human dignity—of man's capacity for suffering, aspiration, rebelliousness, passion, or spirituality; and in some importance of theme and resolution. ...

Considered as a mood or as treatment of experience—and this is especially important in the tone of a production—this intermediate type does not, indeed, harrow the emotions as thoroughly as tragedy, it does not glow so darkly, and generally it possesses less elevation in character and struggle.⁶

Serious drama has been represented on the stage by many fine plays, but certainly the radio has been responsible for a greatly increased production of plays of this type. To select at random a few of the better series: "The Eternal Light," "The Greatest Story Ever Told," "Family Theatre," "New World A-Coming," and "Destination Freedom" are but a few of the many fine series of dramatic radio shows which generally are serious drama.

IV. SUBJECT MATTER OR CONTENT

The predominant content material of most radio drama may be analyzed under one or more of the following major headings:

A. *Historical*

Historical material is based on fact, and may indeed be a true chronicle of a particular segment of history. It generally deals with a group of people rather than with a particular person, although the actions of one or two may dominate.

B. *Biographical*

Biographical material is also based on fact, but differs from historical in that the action of the play is based upon the impact of a particular character. In a radio play of the half-hour variety it is usually better to concentrate on the biographical aspects of historical drama, because of the time limitations.

C. *Romantic*

"All the world loves a lover," and indeed the theme of romance is one of the most widely used. Plots may have romance as primary content, and even where the main subject matter is in another category there is usually "love interest."

D. *Domestic*

Generally one thinks of "domestic" as referring to family scenes

⁶ John Gassner, *Producing the Play* (New York: The Dryden Press, Inc., 1941) p. 47.

and situations. This is one facet of the classification; the other, and not the least, embodies dramatic conflict among the more simple, or—perhaps a better word—“average” people. Thus it is differentiated from “society.”

E. *Society*

Though average persons may flock to see a moving picture laid in the realm of milk and honey, they seem to prefer more humble guests in their living room. It would be difficult to imagine a more homey or popular couple than Fibber and Molly or a more average family than the Goldbergs. Occasionally opulence enters in, but it seems to be the exception rather than the rule.

F. *Social or Propaganda*

A great many of the public service shows are in the realm of social drama as dramatizations of problems of contemporary life. Social drama may be very closely allied to persuasional drama, which presents selected facets of the problem, suggests a predetermined solution, and urges adoption of that solution.

Because the term “public interest” is rather vague, many shows which are pure propaganda are given ready access to the air. During World War II the broadcasters were quick to respond to the emergency, and radio drama played an important role in the effort at home. Aunt Jenny saved waste fat, the Lone Ranger organized waste paper corps, War Bonds were frequently mentioned in scripts, several of John’s other wives took defense jobs or did Red Cross work. On the heavier side a whole series of propaganda broadcasts stressed that “You Can’t Do Business with Hitler.”

V. STYLE

In our discussion of style we are concerned with the manner in which the show is to be presented. The division into two major categories, traditional and experimental, does not follow the usual method. The reason for thus arbitrarily dividing the categories lies once again in the approach to a large and heterogeneous audience. Many listeners, probably the majority, either consciously or unconsciously think of a play they have heard as “regular, you know” or “kind of arty, you know.” If the listener is familiar with the format

and type and method of presentation he is inclined to feel a bit more at home. If the presentation is heavily symbolic, or if stylized devices are too predominant, then (while he may listen—may even enjoy it) it is to him “long haired.” And so we have made the division by familiarity, a logical decision when treating a mass communication medium.

A. *Degree of Illusion*

As a prelude to any discussion of style, it should be pointed out that there are three obvious methods of doing the show. One is to let the play take place as if it were really happening, with the audience as lookers-on. Another is the direct opposite—taking the audience in with you, talking to them, making them a part of the show. The third is a combination of the two. The first method, called representational, or illusionistic, is generally used in such plays as *Life With Father* or *Front Page*. *The Hitchhiker* is a good example of a representational radio play. In these the audience sees or hears something which presumably is actually happening. The second method, called presentational or non-illusionistic, might very well be characterized by the old melodramas with their asides and confidences. The third method, a mixture of the above two, is graphically demonstrated in *Our Town*, with the Stage Manager interpreting presentationally the set and action to the audience, and the actors doing their scenes representationally.

B. *Traditional Styles*

Traditional styles are those styles to which the listener has become more or less accustomed. They have the ring of familiarity.

1. *Classicism*. A discussion of classicism in radio drama very nearly approaches the academic, for this style is little used on the radio. Classicism is characterized by an exceptional passion for order, and these are changing and unstable times. It presupposes a dignity of life in a world where mankind is grasping for mere existence. Today's world is a world of change; classicism stands for the preservation of those forms and ideas which have stood the test of time. In a complex world, classicism calls for simplicity of character. In a topsy turvy world, classicism calls for logical organization. In a world of supersonic planes and ultrafax, classicism holds

for unity in time and place. It is small wonder that classicism plays little part in present-day radio.

2. *Romanticism*. A couple of centuries ago the literary and artistic world felt the rumble of reaction against the severity of neo-classicism. Change did not come overnight, but, though gradual, it was definite. The pendulum swung from the austerity of classicism to a less stern outlook on life. In time, this movement was called the romantic movement, or romanticism. Carried to its extreme (and it was), romanticism became excessively sentimental and theatrical. So strong did the romantic movement become, that even today when realism is the predominant method of dramatic expression, there are many romantic themes and treatments. Indeed this is to be expected, for the eternal hope of man for a gentler and more beautiful life is inherent in romanticism.

Romantic tragedy, romantic comedy, romantic drama, romantic farce, romantic melodrama—all of these are well established types. They have in common, principal characters which are often heroic in stature, complex in nature and yet tend to be typed. Emotion is a strong element in romanticism, and story value and mood are important characteristics. There is a tendency to glamorize even the unglamorous things, to gloss over defects in characters. Movement is sweeping and tends toward the theatrical; and the romanticist gazes wide-eyed at his own achievement.

Certainly there are many fine characteristics embodied in romanticism. Its idealism, inherent striving for a better life, its optimism, its liberality—these qualities make it a genuine contribution. When the pendulum swings too far, however, we have a wide-eyed naïveté, a starry-eyed unconcern for things as they really are, dewy-eyed idealism, moist-eyed sentimentalism. Dialogue may be overly heightened and characters overly melodramatic.

There is no doubt that romanticism has much to recommend it and that some of its concepts are excellent. Contemporary critics prefer to believe that in this period of realism we have retained many of the wholesome aspects of romanticism, and that most of the unhealthy ones have disappeared. In radio this is not always true. A great many of the daytime serials are presented in a romantic

vein, the type of romanticism which engages in slushy sentimentality and overdone love interest. Children's shows, often melodramatic, carry strong romantic themes in heroic characters, mysterious surroundings, and excessive theatricalism. The heightened language of romanticism is overly displayed in many of the artistic attempts at a "new form" of radio theatre. The strong attention to story value and mood is featured in most radio drama.

3. *Realism*. Again the pendulum swings, and the theatrical focus changes. Life becomes real and earnest. The light that was realism penetrated into the dark corners to reveal the earthy and shabby things that romanticists would not see. The turn of the century saw realism gaining strong hold on the literary, dramatic, and artistic scene, and with notable exceptions it has persisted to the present.

Realism attempts to give the illusion of real life, subject to some artistic detachment. It attempts a kind of scientific objectivity in approach. As a conscious reaction to romanticism, realism is directly opposed to it in many ways: the characters are not heroic, they are more simple in their everyday actions (yet more complex because of approximation to life), there is a minimization of big scenes, and an elimination of the more artificial elements.

Realism is an approach to scientific objectivity; it is not absolute objectivity. The principles of selection and emphasis which are necessary in any art are also present in realism. The selection is more varied and down to earth, and the emphasis is more impartial than in romanticism.

To illustrate how the principle of selectivity might work to advantage in achieving reality, let us imagine a hypothetical scene in a radio show. The scene: A small restaurant on a busy street. The characters: husband, wife, baby, small crowd. The situation: husband has come home to find wife beaten down because the baby has been obstreperous. Wife suggests that they go out for dinner. Husband, somewhat piqued that dinner isn't ready, chides wife for not being able to do simple job of taking care of house and baby. Wife flares up. Both of their tempers are ragged as we join them in the restaurant where hubby is demonstrating how simple it is to take care of the baby.

HUSBAND: You see, Jane, there is absolutely nothing to it. The child recognizes the voice of authority and minds.

WIFE: Yes dear, you're so right. Look out for the water pitcher!

HUSBAND: Theodore! Sit down and keep your hands off the things on the table. There, that's a good boy. (*To wife.*) See how simple it is?

WIFE: Yes dear. He's getting up again.

HUSBAND: What! Theodore, mind Papa and stay away—

BABY: (*Starts sniffing.*)

HUSBAND: (*Using the appeal to logic.*) Now, son, Papa doesn't want to be harsh, but . . .

SOUND: *Pitcher breaking and silverware clattering.*

HUSBAND: Now see what you've done. Theodore, I ought to—

BABY: (*Now screaming.*)

WIFE: Try the voice of authority again, dear. It works so well.

Suppose this scene were actually happening. Here is a partial list of some of the actual sounds attendant.

Traffic in the street—cars going by, horns honking, a heavy truck.

Traffic in the cafe—people walking and talking, cash register, a telephone, marble tables, dishes rattling, juke box, squeak of chairs, etc.

If all these sounds were projected into the short sequence in their actual volume they would be so distracting the listener would become extremely confused. Yet this is what the naturalist would strive for. But the fact is that our ears are selective. We *hear*, but we do not *listen* to or notice the sounds which follow a familiar pattern. The realist picks out not the many, but a few sounds to help convey the scene and the action. Very light background noises at the beginning of the scene, subsequently faded way down, and the sound of the pitcher breaking. These selected sounds adequately set the scene and project the action. Actually they are the only sounds needed. The realist is making plainer to the audience this real life situation by selecting and emphasizing certain sound ele-

ments, not by attempting to bring in every possible sound which might be present.

4. *Sentimentalism*. In the section on romanticism mention was made of excess sentimentalism as a destructive offshoot. There needs to be more said about this subject, for nowhere do we find sentimentalism more used than on the radio.

Let us speak frankly. Sentimentalism is frowned upon by the critics and intellectuals, and gobbled up by the average folk. Those of us in radio cannot afford to underestimate the power of sentimentalism; neither, however, need we be mawkish in our approach to its use. Let us be sure we understand it.

"Sentimentalism is a kind of domesticated romanticism that results from the discovery of the possibility of evoking agreeable emotions in the treatment of familiar social and domestic life."⁷ Sentimentalism tends to look at the world through rose-colored glasses, rationalizing rather than reasoning, and often invokes conscious effort to jerk a few tears. It may also be thoroughly charming. From a sociological point of view we might say that sentimentalism may be harmful in that it takes into little account the realities of life, especially if those realities involve an object which does not lie in the realm of the "nice."

It is not difficult to theorize that real and true sentiment is one of man's finest attributes, and that sentimentalism which appeals to man's better nature and appetite is good; while that sentimentalism which is mawkish and cheap, embodying conscious technique to milk a few more tears, is dishonest. But can the line be drawn arbitrarily? Application of theory is sometimes very difficult. The sentimental daytime serial which to one person seems mawkish appeals strongly to the next person as a warm and tender story of people who have become her close friends.

C. *Experimental Styles*

Experimental styles are those styles to which the listener has not become accustomed. To him they lack familiarity. Expressionistic, impressionistic, stylistic shows—these may be truly delightful to the

⁷ Fred B. Millet and G. E. Bentley, *The Art of the Drama* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1935), p. 155.

cultivated ear and the educated mind. But they have been compared to caviar and artichokes; one must ordinarily develop a taste for them. Highly symbolic devices, repetition, massed effects, verse choirs may, to the uninitiated, call attention to themselves, thus losing dramatic impact.

This is not to say that experimental styles should never be used or tried. The history of the drama is a history of revolution and change. Indeed, our attention has been called to that fact in the descriptions of classicism, romanticism, and realism. Many of these changes ultimately prove beneficial, but the change is not accomplished overnight. Perhaps to your way of thinking the listener should be surfeited with his daily radio diet of melodrama and sentimentalism. But the evidence lies to the contrary! He likes it the way it is. He will welcome something new, but he will not let it be shoved down his throat. Try to push him and he has retaliation—the little switch on his radio.

1. *Expressionism*. During the first quarter of the present century there arose in the theatre a group of dramatists who were dissatisfied with the realistic approach to presentation and performance. They argued, often quite plausibly, that realism limited the author, actor, and director in what they could say and how they could say it. They felt that realism's (or naturalism, as it was then called) attention to the details of life kept them from achieving the representation of the inner spirits of men and things.

This rebellion against realism has brought some interesting new forms of drama into the world, some of which have been used on the air. This is not the place for a detailed discussion of all of the "isms"—many short-lived—which have flashed across the dramatic horizon; however, expressionistic plays and devices are not too uncommon on the air, and by taking a short look at this one form we can get an idea of the non-realistic radio of today.

Despite the difficulty of accurately defining expressionism (as with any comparatively new style), some of its characteristics can be indicated. An attribute often noticeable is bluntness and violence in presentation. Themes and ideas are repeated over and over. The tempo is generally rapid and there is obvious exploitation of

devices. In the theater these devices are represented by types of setting, unusual lighting effects, use of masks, etc. In radio, these devices are such things as voice choirs, dead booths, echoed voices, and stylized sound and music. In the more traditional styles, sound and music are used artistically to supplement the spoken word, but in expressionism each or both may assume identities of their own, either realistically or symbolically.

Which brings us to another point. Expressionism freely mixes the objective and the subjective, the presentational and the representational. Using a very free handling of styles, it may mix verse and prose, realism and romanticism, classicism and impressionism. Frankly theatrical, expressionistic drama does not attempt to hide its devices and mixtures; instead it seems to glory in them. The characters may be real or unreal, may be objectively developed or subjective voices.

Some of the best expressionistic drama for radio goes "all the way," but in the main expressionism is diluted heavily so that it will not be such a shock to radio listeners who are used to hearing sentimental comedies and romantic melodramas.

It might be appropriate and helpful to end this discussion of styles with this short summary:

Perhaps the whole matter of realism, naturalism, expressionism, etc., will be clearer if the terms applied to these literary manners are schematically arranged in a graded scale (taken not too seriously). If we start with the object itself, we pass to

1. Photography—which presumably approaches the actual as closely as any form of art can.
2. Naturalism—which employs more details than the following manners of writing and perhaps less selection.
3. Realism—which selects more rigorously than naturalism the details necessary to accomplish its somewhat stern purpose.
4. Impressionism—which portrays, but portrays chiefly those details which reflect the personal mood of the artist at the moment of composition.
5. Expressionism—which portrays an object but views it subjectively, as modified or distorted by the highly individual and intellectual conception of the author.⁸

⁸ William F. Thrall and Addison Hibbard, *A Handbook to Literature* (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1936), p. 174.

The definitions above are approached more from the point of view of the writer. Certainly they do, however, hold good insofar as production and acting are concerned.

VI. FACTUAL BASIS

In analyzing the radio drama (or in writing one) decision as to the factual elements must be made. The story may be based on an actual happening, it may be entirely fictional, it may be based on fancy or imagination, or it may be fantasy.

A. *Based on Fact*

The play is intended to be fairly true to existing knowledge about persons or situations. It does not necessarily conform to *all* the facts; dramatic license may be used. But certainly the essence is accurately reproduced.

B. *Based on Fiction*

The approach to fiction is different from that of fact. We are here concerned primarily with keeping the drama in range of the imaginative experience of the listener. The primary question is that of extent of probability. It was Aristotle who said in effect that the probable impossible makes a better story than the possible improbable.

C. *Fantasy*

Fiction may be thought of as possible probability, and fantasy as probable impossibility. Do not make the mistake of thinking of fantasy and fantastic as synonymous. Fantastic connotes the extravagant, unreal, and ridiculous, while fantasy is chimerical, imaginative, fanciful. It is of "such stuff as dreams are made on." Fantasy is *Runyon Jones*⁹ and *The Word*;¹⁰ it is *Adolph and Mrs. Runyon*¹¹ and *My Client Curley*;¹² it is *The Ghost of Benjamin Sweet*¹³ and *The Devil and Daniel Webster*.¹⁴

⁹ In Norman Corwin, *Thirteen by Corwin* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1942), pp. 3-22.

¹⁰ In Arch Oboler, *This Freedom* (New York: Random House, 1942), pp. 103-22.

¹¹ In Arch Oboler, *Plays for Americans* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1942), pp. 131-48.

¹² In A. H. Lass, Earle McGill, and Donald Axelrod, *Plays from Radio* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1948), pp. 31-49.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 81-101.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 271-90.

Radio is a superlative medium for presenting fantasy. For it is only on the radio that the audience may call into play its full imagination, let it soar wide and fancy free with the play itself.

VII. NUMBER OF DRAMATIC SEQUENCES

Continuity in radio drama is not a smooth curve. A pictorial representation would show peaks and depressions, some smooth, some sharp. What causes these fluctuations? Several reasons can be given:

1. Change in progression of action
2. Change in scene or locale
3. Change of mood
4. Introduction of new characters
5. Introduction of new dramatic element (revelation, discovery, etc.)
6. Change of time.

In drama, something must happen. When something does happen, usually in one of the above categories, the flow or continuity is broken. The trick is to make these changes seem logical and natural, fitting them together without a break. Whether the plot principle, episodic principle, or episodic plot principle (see below) is used, the scenes should be constructed so as to be in accord emotionally and logically with those contiguous to them.

A scene may be defined as a logical unit of drama that encompasses a definite but not a highly significant change in time, place, action, or mood. An act is a combination of scenes, arranged climactically, which represents a definite aspect or phase of the dramatic conflict, i.e., introduction, rising action, crisis, climax, and denouement.¹⁵

In radio drama these structural elements may be arranged differently than in a play for the stage. The elements are all present, but do not necessarily follow in order. In a half-hour show in which the

¹⁵ Introduction is self-explanatory. Rising action has to do with the complication and conflict, leading to the crisis. The crisis is the high point or critical stage of the dramatic action leading to the climax. The climax is the turning point, the sink or swim, live or die episode. The denouement is "The final unravelling of the plot." It makes clear any complications of the plot not previously apparent.

elements are in regular order, the first act usually takes in the introduction, most of the rising action leading up to the crisis, and occasionally the crisis itself. It usually ends on a sub-climax. The second act continues the rising action to the crisis and climax. The denouement, if there is one, is generally very short. The story line in radio drama is generally so simple that a denouement is superfluous. In some mystery or adventure melodramas suspense is maintained till a moment from the end, and a quick denouement is used as a "kicker," or a theatrical ending device after the closing commercial.

Because of the time element in radio drama, the length of the acts is fairly uniform. In a thirty-minute show the first act lies in the first fifteen minutes and the last act in the last fifteen minutes. Some story editors of hour-length dramas prefer the first and third acts to be longer, to facilitate the station break. Others prefer the first and second acts to be the longer. Scenes, however, are not uniform in length, nor should they be. Their length is dependent upon several things: their function in the dramatic action, the rhythm of the play, the necessity for exposition, development of character.

Scenes are divided by music, sound, silence, narration, or any combination of these. The vital necessity for maintaining the continuity or flow of the dramatic action and mood requires smooth transitions. Rough transitions may destroy the illusion for the listener and make him lose interest. The transitions should smoothly but definitely lead out of the preceding scene, establish the change, and lead into the succeeding scene. The director, engineer, actor, sound man, music man, and narrator are equally responsible for the cohesion necessary in the blending of these elements.

VIII. DEVELOPMENT

There are three basic methods of developing the plot, or, to put it more simply if less accurately, of telling the story. One method is to tell the story by the use of related incidents. Another is to tell the story by the use of closely interwoven incidents. The third is a combination of the above two. The first method is called episodic

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principle of development, and the second, plot principle of development. The combination has no name in general usage. I call it the "episodic plot" principle of development.

A. Plot Principle

Reduced to its simplest terms, development by the plot principle means that each scene is not only necessary to the development of the play, but that it is necessary to each contiguous scene. In other words, the second scene of the first act is the natural result of scene one, and it develops logically and emotionally into scene three. Each scene is in the proper place and could not exchange places with any other scene. In the vernacular of the theatre, plot development produces a very "tight" play.

The plot principle of development is considered the strongest, because it allows for a very smooth flow of action and emphasizes the continuing story line. Mood is much easier to establish and hold, and the pattern of action is undistorted. Attention is held, inasmuch as the unraveling of plot makes the listener want to listen up to the end of the play, in order to find out what happens.

B. Episodic Principle

Remember *Gulliver's Travels*? An excellent book, often absorbing, yet not difficult to lay down. In this story, like many others, the plot is developed by the inclusion of several related incidents, none of which are absolutely necessary to the plot, any of which could exchange places with any other. The weakness of this kind of story development was apparent when *Gulliver* was adapted for radio. The "NBC Theatre," a distinguished production organization which has presented many excellent shows, made something less than a contribution to radio when it presented a dramatization of Mr. Swift's great satire. Overcoming the problems of midget voices and giant voices, the producers either could not overcome or did not realize the problems inherent in episodic development. Each of the three acts was a self-contained episode in the adventures of Gulliver, and the only thread of continuity in the three acts was in the person of Gulliver himself.

The problem of episodic development is not always illustrated so graphically. Take Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*. Few critics would describe

this play as episodic. Yet consider this character Peer Gynt—the second cousin to Thomas Wolfe's Eugene Gant—searching for “a stone, a leaf, an unfound door”—engaged in adventurous flight, travel, return. There is much that is episodic in *Peer Gynt*, but Ibsen, the master dramatist, wove an unmistakable thread of continuity throughout the story. Peer's emotional and physical traits are developed. Though certain of his foibles and follies stay with him, his is not a static character. It was this thread of continuity which was so magnificently developed by the Old Vic Players in a guest appearance on the “Columbia Workshop.” Peer's character permeated the progression of episodes to a very logical conclusion.

C. *Episodic Plot Principle*

A substantial portion of radio drama occupies that continuum between tight plot development and loose episodic development. The problem becomes one of tying the interrelated episodes together into a whole to achieve a unity of thought and action. The most used and generally the most effective means of achieving this continuity is through the use of narration, which, combined with skillful placement of episodes, gives the effect of that kind of progression which characterizes plot development.

IX. TIME COVERED

By time covered is meant simply how long a period of time is consumed in the play. The ancients agreed among themselves that a play should progress from beginning to end in less than a day. But they had never heard of flashbacks or montages.

X. PREDOMINANT ELEMENT

The predominant element is that basic or central constituent of a play which controls the overall approach to its writing, interpretation, presentation, and reception. It is the controlling element to which the other less dominant elements must be logically and emotionally related. The predominant element is concerned with the play as a whole, rather than with individual parts. Those elements which serve as dominant elements are: plot, characters, theme, idea, setting, environment, action, and rhythm.

The predominant element enters into all phases of the play, from its conception to its reception. In each of these phases, the player must understand and give precedence to this predominant element. Often we find plays in which two elements have just about the same weight, exert just about the same influence, and for practical purposes are equal. In this event these two elements are "co-dominant."

It is the unusual play indeed which does not have strong secondary elements. These secondary elements may exert strong pressure upon the predominant element and help shape its final form. Any one (or two) could assume the dominance and be modified by any or all of the others. For example: The predominant element of a certain play could be plot, with strong secondary elements of character and environment; or the predominant element could be character, with theme secondary. Each of these dramatic elements enters into every play, but here we are concerned with the relative strength of each.

A. *Plot*

In a play where plot is the predominant element, the development is generally by plot principle. In rare cases it may be a very strong episodic plot development. The elements which make up the plot are generally rather fully and clearly delineated: exposition, foreshadowing, conflict, complication, crisis, climax, denouement. In a radio play the order of these may not be the same as in a play for the theatre.

B. *Characters*

When the characters are the predominant element, they are well developed, and as many facets as possible are shown. Principal characters are dynamic; the minor characters may be less so. Motivations are flawless and dramatically effective and consistent. The style of the play is generally representative.

C. *Theme and Idea*

By theme we mean the overall ideological concept behind the drama, and the proper and adequate presentation of that concept.

We have differentiated between theme and idea for a reason which an example may make clear. In Norman Corwin's *They Fly*

*Through the Air*¹⁶ the basic theme is man's inhumanity to man. The development of the theme is demonstrably loaded, so that the listener is guided into a definite response pattern. Ostensibly, however, the reaction is the listener's own. In Ralph Andrist's and Ralph Backlund's superb series, "Neither Free Nor Equal,"¹⁷ the basic theme, man's inhumanity to man, is the same; and the listener is also guided into a definite response pattern. The difference is that the listener is plainly urged to react in a response to the appeal. This latter then is the "idea" of the show.

D. Mood

Mood is so often a by-product of other factors that it usually is not thought of as a prime characteristic of drama, but in many of the "squeaking door" and psychological melodramas, mood takes a primary or secondary place. In *Fever in the Night*,¹⁸ Harry Kleiner's unusual and outstanding impressionistic play for radio, the theme of futility is certainly an outstanding element, but mood certainly shares the top spot. For another example of a radio play in which mood is a strong factor, see Martin Maloney's *The Death of the Average Man* (pp. 309-327).

E. Environment

Environment means the whole of the physical factors exerted upon the development of the story. *Dead End* is an excellent example of this, as is Arch Oboler's *This Precious Freedom*.¹⁹ In each of these plays the mores of a society insensible and deadened to its own ills affect the leading characters. The first is more impersonal, showing the effect of environment on a group of people; the second is more personal in that the protagonist is one person, rather than a group.

¹⁶ In Norman Corwin, *Thirteen by Corwin* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1942), pp. 57-77.

¹⁷ Broadcast as a public service series by WCCO, Minneapolis-St. Paul. The first program was broadcast June 25, 1947. The series, designed to foster racial and religious understanding in the Northwest, received several national citations and nationwide acclaim.

¹⁸ Harry Kleiner, in *Yale Radio Plays*, edited by Constance Welch and Walter Prichard Eaton (Boston: Expression Co., 1940), pp. 273-316.

¹⁹ In Arch Oboler, *Oboler Omnibus: Radio Plays and Personalities* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1945), pp. 159-76.

F. Setting

Who can forget the deadening horror of Manderly, permeated by the spirit of Rebecca? Setting is part of environment, to be sure, but it is perhaps a more personal application in that it takes on definitely human attributes for inciting action and thought. The protagonist of *The Signal Man*²⁰ lives his life in a crevasse, his contact with the world an iron dragon which roars out of a tunnel in the side of a mountain. Setting is a powerful force in Mrs. Stevenson's four walls and a telephone—and a voice that says *Sorry, Wrong Number*.²¹ These settings are all strong elements.

G. Action

The story line in melodramas and farces is often the predominant element, but it generally shares its position with or is strongly influenced by action. In other types of drama, too, the relentless surge of action may strongly affect the other elements.

H. Rhythm

Rhythm, like action, may be both an external and internal characteristic of the play. Seldom if ever would the overall rhythm of a drama dominate the more tangible characteristics listed above. Externally, however, the rhythm of certain sketches and short plays may dominate in an extremely delightful fashion. An excellent example is "The Murder Mystery" in Peter Dixon's *Radio Sketches*.

XI. STRUCTURAL STYLE

The three major types of radio plays might be compared with certain types of magazine fiction. On the one hand are the short stories, complete in themselves, bearing little resemblance to those of the next issue except, perhaps, in style or decoration. The second type of story, complete in itself, employs characters which have appeared before and will appear again, i.e., Scattergood Baines and Alexander Botts. A third group, the serials, have the same characters in a common pattern of rising action for several issues before the climax and denouement. Much the same obtains in radio.

²⁰ In A. H. Lass, Earle McGill, and Donald Axelrod, *Plays from Radio* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1948), pp. 57-75.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-24.

A. Unit Play

A unit play is one in which the action is complete. It may or may not be incorporated with other unit plays in a series. It is a complete drama, self-contained.

1. *Unit play in frame.* There is little radio drama which is, strictly speaking, a single unit not related to other presentations. Because of the ephemeral nature of radio, listener impact is achieved primarily by repetition, and the single dramatic offering offers little in listener identification. Occasionally such productions are very effective, especially when tied in with a particular occasion or subject. Corwin's historic V. E. Day broadcast, the annual *Christmas Carol*, documentary single-shots such as ABC's *Communism—U.S.A.* at the height of congressional investigation by the Un-American Activities Committee, and CBS's *Report Card* at the height of educators' activities toward teacher recruitment—all of these were extremely effective. But in the main, a series of shows is much more effective.

2. *Unit play in series.* Most of the radio plays which are unit shows are part of a series of shows which has certain distinguishing characteristics. The ties which bind these shows together may be strong or weak. Each play may have one or more of the following characteristics or elements in common with the other plays in the series: characters, theme, type of show, format, style, situation, method of presentation, and purpose. The number of these factors which the shows have in common, coupled with the degree of use, determines to a great extent the continuity of the series. Let us pick at random two dramatic series and see how closely allied the individual shows are.

"Sam Spade"

- CHARACTERS: Each show features Sam Spade in very strong role.
- THEME: Crime seldom pays off—except to Spade.
- TYPE OF SHOW: Mystery melodramas (of the whodunit variety).
- FORMAT: Invariably the same opening, billboard, teaser sequence with Sam on phone, commercial, first scene lead-in to crime. Dramatization to climax,

	denouement in explanation by Spade to Girl Friday in closing scene.
STYLE:	Realistic action and sound. Music of the same general type in all shows.
SITUATION:	Sam runs across mystery in shape of enigma, gets hit on the head once or twice, is thus galvanized into thought, and traps the criminal.
METHOD OF	
PRESENTATION:	Mostly representational. Some presentational narration.
PURPOSE:	Entertain and persuade (sell).

"Lux Radio Theatre"

CHARACTERS:	Announcer and M.C. same for all shows. Shows and characters vary from week to week.
THEME:	Each show has own different theme.
TYPE OF SHOW:	Varies with each show, but tends to be on lighter side.
FORMAT:	Opening is same in all shows as are middle commercials and show identifications and closing. At end, stars are introduced, each gives word for Lux, and promotes his or her current movie.
STYLE:	Varies with each presentation according to the play being done.
SITUATION:	Varies with each show.
METHOD OF	
PRESENTATION:	Varies, but the approach from point of view of production is easy to spot. For instance: board fades were predominant as a transition device for period of about a year.
PURPOSE:	Entertain and persuade (sell).

When we look at the breakdown of "Sam Spade" we find a very highly developed factor consistency in each separate show. Not only are each of the factors quite similar, but the degree of "strength" of each is about the same for each show. "Lux Radio

Theatre" on the other hand has comparatively little consistency in the shows themselves but a lot in format.

	<i>Spade</i>	<i>Lux</i>
Characters	Strong	Weak
Theme	Strong	Weak
Type of Show	Very strong	Medium
Format	Very strong	Strong
Style	Strong	Medium
Situation	Strong	Weak
Presentation	Strong	Medium

A comparison of the ratings of these two programs shows "Lux" leading the field, with "Spade" in and out of the top twenty. This presents an anomaly, for if listener response is enhanced by familiarity, as many programmers aver, "Spade" should certainly be much closer to "Lux." A more scientific comparison would bring out the factors of broadcast length, time program has been on the air, broadcast time, program promotion, and competing shows. From just the given factors of continuity, however, it would seem that "Lux" has hit on a happy medium between status quo and change, while "Spade" is too dependent on the status quo.

"Lux" presents variety and contrast in most of the elements of its shows, yet has strong continuity in the appeal to glamor, identification of listeners with stars, format, and M.C. These factors keep the listeners by the tens of millions coming back for more. While of "Spade," many intelligent listeners might well say, "When you've heard one show, you've heard them all."

B. *Serial Drama*

Serial drama is generally programmed "across the board," that is, daily. Like the continued story, each segment ends with a sub-crisis. But, unlike the story, it never really ends. The great majority of serial dramas are of the "revolving plot" type, in which a new story arises out of the old one before the latter is resolved. Most serial drama falls either in the "soap opera" classification, or the "kid show" group. The conflicts themselves are of a simple and rather obvious nature, but the simultaneous subplots sometimes make the conflicts seem more complex than they really are.

The main characters are generally the same from month to month, year to year. Most radio writers seem to feel that in serial drama this is necessary. "A sequence that violates our idea of their characters might stir our resentment. We appreciate their eternal reassurance. We like their permanence in a changing world. . . . The unchanging core of the characters, and the often unchanging core of their interrelationships, is what is referred to as the *formula* of a serial." ²²

Some references to serial drama have been made above in the discussion under Literary Type and Style. If we were to make a general statement concerning daytime serial drama (aimed primarily at women) it would be that it follows a pattern of sentimental comedy, inclined toward the melodramatic, but with such slow action that the melodramatic appeal is defeated. It is often mawkishly sentimental and is the least artistic of radio drama. But many women like it; it helps some of them through the drudgery of day-in and day-out tasks. It also sells soap.

A general statement on late afternoon serial drama (aimed primarily at children) would be that it follows a pattern of overly simplified, yet highly charged and realistic adventure melodrama. Overly simplified because the experience patterns of youngsters are less complex than those of their elders, and highly charged to keep abreast with the tremendous imaginative capacity of children.

XII. STRUCTURAL FORM

Drama on the air may be presented in a variety of forms, each of which has its own peculiarities. Those forms are: the "conventional" radio play, the dramatic narrative, documentary, dramatic monologue, dramatic sketch, dramatized news, and dramatized commercial. The conventional radio play is discussed adequately in other parts of this book and will not be separately discussed here. Preliminary to a discussion of the other forms of radio drama, mention should be made of some of the problems of adaptation. All radio scripts are either original or adaptations of other material for

²² Erik Barnouw, *Handbook of Radio Writing*, rev. ed., (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1947), p. 193.

radio. There are several excellent sections on adaptations in radio writing texts, especially Crews,²³ Wylie,²⁴ and Barnouw.²⁵

Let us summarize a few of the more important considerations of adapting other literary or dramatic materials to radio.

The first and most obvious task is to translate the essence of the original work to one for radio. It is necessary, therefore, to first become acquainted with the original. Study it carefully. What is its theme, its purpose? How did the author approach his subject? What is the mood of the writing? For whom was the book, or play, or story, written? Become familiar with the characters, the action. Saturate yourself in the flavor of the dialogue. The adapter has the problem of cutting the original down and translating written dialogue to spoken dialogue. When the time element allows, the director and actors should become familiar with two separate parts—the original and the adaptation. Often the actor can get a much better idea of his character from the original than from the adaptation, because the script is not always representative of the original. The compression or expansion made necessary by the limitation of time may necessitate eliminating subplots and minor characters, or creating new characters and situations. Motivations may have to be shifted, emphasis re-directed, action changed.

It is the responsibility of the director and actors to keep the mood and spirit of the original, just as it is the responsibility of the writer to follow the clear intent of the original author, but there need not be slavish adherence to the original if by slightly changing some of its facets the result will be better radio fare.

A. *Dramatic Narrative*

In a dramatic narrative, we have a person telling a story, looking at the characters and telling what they are doing. This narrator, or story teller, is the main part of the play, and if he tells the story dramatically, that is all that is necessary. The more general practice, however, is to add to the impact of the story by inserting small

²³ Albert Crews, *Professional Radio Writing* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1946).

²⁴ Max Wylie, *Radio Writing* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1939).

²⁵ Erik Barnouw, *Handbook of Radio Writing*, rev. ed., (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1947).

dramatic scenes, sound effects, and music. These add contrast and variety, and give additional "punch" to the climaxes. Dramatic narratives are generally not long. Because of the nature of the form, it is seldom used in shows of over one-quarter hour in length, though it may be integrated into a longer show as a featured segment.

B. *Documentary*

Documentaries came into the broadcasting picture at the tail end of the thirties, and, found to be an excellent vehicle for getting across logic by means of emotion, were immediately conscripted for propaganda use. Some of the greatest documentaries were those of the war period—for instance, Corwin's *We Hold These Truths*.²⁶

After the war, the thematic pattern was kept in the same vein for most documentary broadcasts. Thus most people believe that a serious theme is necessary for documentaries, and some even believe that the reverse holds true—that all socially significant radio plays are documentaries. This seems to be stretching it a bit. For though at the present time it appears impossible to divorce content and approach from internal form, the form is distinctive enough to identify the presentation. Let us take a look at some of the basic earmarks of the documentary.

1. It is primarily presentational in its approach. Most of the elements of the show are designed to speak directly to the listeners, and the illusional elements are generally very swift-moving, almost kaleidoscopic.
2. It purports to deal with true things—with facts—or at any rate what the producers of the show would have the audience believe are facts. These facts are designed in a rhetorical pattern:
 - a. The problem is posed
 - b. Proof is offered of the existence of the problem
 - c. A solution is proposed (directly or by implication)
 - d. Logic (real or implied) is used in the approach to all phases of the presentation. Emotional appeal is not lacking—it is used specifically to point up each facet of the problem. Emotional appeal (a strong element of drama) is,

²⁶ In Norman Corwin, *More By Corwin* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1944), pp. 57-87.

however, subservient to the appeal to logic (a strong element of rhetoric)

3. The internal structure is generally episodic, but the pattern of progression is such that an episodic plot development is achieved. This, combined with the presentational aspects, gives the listener little opportunity to escape reality.
4. A strong narrative structure is generally used. By this we mean that the narration is a major element of the presentation, tying together the episodes, reiterating the theme, expounding the solution and often presenting the peroration.
5. Persuasion is inherent to some degree. Despite the assumption of a mantle of truth suggested in the derivation of the word itself, the rhetorical elements dictate a degree of persuasion.
6. There is generally a peroration at the end, often in the form of a separate but integrated speech by an outside party, or by narration.

Not all of these elements are incorporated in every documentary, but they are present in most.²⁷

C. *Dramatic Monologue*

A dramatic monologue involves telling the story by a single person, who approaches it from the point of view of the characters. He may assume several guises in his reading of the story. He does not pretend to act out each character; he does try for a fairly complete job of impersonation. Often the story is told by just one character, and thus the storyteller tells it from just the point of view of that one character.

D. *Dramatic Sketch*

The dramatic sketch is a short, condensed scene which is designed for quick, non-critical appreciation by the audience. It is generally integrated into a longer program. The conflict is stated, not developed, with fast rising action to a minor climax. Because of the short length of the sketch, there is seldom time to build up to any kind of a major climax. Sketches, like monologues, were more

²⁷ As an excellent touchstone for further investigation, the reader is referred to the chapter on documentaries in: Martin Maloney, *The Radio Play* (Evanston, Illinois: Student Book Exchange, 1949).

popular during the thirties. They are still popular, but they have tended to become extremely light (usually farcical). Seldom are sketches incorporated into a more serious show. The student who is interested in looking over material may find it in *Radio Sketches*.²⁸

E. *Dramatized News*

Dramatized news is the technique of recreating important current happenings in a dramatic format. News events of prominence are tied together with narration, and music and sound effects are used both as transitions and within the scenes to achieve a unified program. *The March of Time* was an outstanding instance of this type of drama.

F. *Dramatized Commercials*

The dramatized commercial is now the rule, rather than the exception. In response to requests by sponsors and agencies for new and attention-getting material, writers have been increasingly turning toward the dramatized form to get results. Dramatized commercials come in many shapes and sizes, with or without music or sound. They may be integrated into the program, or may be used as spots. A fairly complete discussion of this type of commercial may be found in *Modern Radio Advertising*.²⁹

XIII. PURPOSE

There are three basic purposes, none mutually exclusive, which may lie behind the show. These are: to inform, to entertain, to persuade.

A. *To Entertain*

Entertainment is the strongest of these three factors; indeed in most shows, it is the primary purpose. Radio business is show business, and show business is entertainment.

To certain observers of the contemporary radio scene, entertainment alone is not too legitimate a reason for a show. They believe that the power of radio should be used more for education or in-

²⁸ Peter Dixon, *Radio Sketches and How to Write Them* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1936).

²⁹ Charles Hull Wolfe, *Modern Radio Advertising*, (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1949), pp. 469-609.

formation than for entertainment. Most practicing radio people will agree that radio can and should do more public service programming, but they believe that entertainment for the sake of entertainment is an excellent reason in itself.

Entertainment is not just melodramas, farces, and variety shows. There may be, and often is, an attempt at serious entertainment, the kind of dramatic entertainment that is inherent in most of radio's better shows. There should be an element of entertainment in all radio shows, even those—speak softly—which are aimed at educating or informing the listener. The phrase "sugar-coating the pill" is not one to be taken lightly.³⁰

When an entertainment program is in the planning stage, the question of degree should be thoroughly discussed. Are we trying to make the listener laugh? If so, how much? Lay 'em in the aisles (in theatre vernacular) or work for easy chuckles? Is this more serious entertainment? How serious? (A tragedy which employed no humor whatsoever might very well constitute a type of serious entertainment.)

B. To Inform

The primary purpose of a great many radio programs is to inform the listener. The most effective informational drama can almost always be boiled down to a five-minute speech. Those who are in charge of informational shows could and should take a tip from the soap operas. In each episode, or daily show, the soap opera does just one thing. Indeed, this is often the episode title—"Jenny Tells Mary the Secret," "Mother Perkins Makes a Decision," "Stella Says Goodbye to Jim."

An intelligent Englishman was once asked what he thought about American radio. "Why—it's rather decent, most of it," he answered, and then he fumbled for the proper qualification, "Some of it is a bit—jazzed up, you know." His terminology might be considered old fashioned, but his qualification was unerringly correct. Our

³⁰ Some educators object to the use of this phrase. They contend that this phrase connotes that the educational pill is bitter, whereas it is in truth an exciting and pleasurable affair. And so it is, but the fact remains that dramatizing an idea is one of the most effective methods of successfully transmitting it to another person.

radio is "jazzed up," or "hypoed." The American radio audience is accustomed to this, and the majority of listeners do not particularly care for programs which try too assiduously to educate them. The critic may very well say that this is a fine commentary on the listening audience, but that is the way it is.

There are fine public service shows of an informational type which recognize that in order to be most effective, they must entertain as well as educate or inform. The fact that entertainment is present does not mean that the show is taken out of the informational class. A thirty-minute show might incorporate only a small portion of information, but if its aim is to be informational, and it accomplishes its purpose, what difference does it make if entertainment makes up eighty per cent of the show?

C. *To Persuade*

The same case for entertainment as a major portion of any radio show is also appropriate in this category. It is imperative that the audience stay with you if you are going to attempt to persuade them, and you can best keep your audience by entertaining them. The radio player must at all times keep in mind the ethics of persuasion. Radio is a powerful medium; drama, a powerful form. When these two are combined, one of the most potent methods of persuasion is effected.

D. *Combination*

There are a great many dramatic shows which have as a purpose a combination of the above purposes. The highway safety show is intended primarily to persuade drivers to be more careful, but it employs information to get across the facts needed to persuade. And it tries to present these facts in a manner which (though it may be gruesome) holds the audience. Most commercial programs, by providing entertainment, aim at persuading the listener to buy the product the sponsor sells.

XIV. INTENDED AUDIENCE

The well-planned radio program is aimed at a certain audience. The broad audience classifications are: general and specific.

A. *General Audiences*

Shows that are aimed at general audiences embody elements which are of interest to the majority of listeners. They do not necessarily appeal to every listener, but they do employ the "scattergun" technique.

B. *Specific Audiences*

Most network shows tend to try for the widest possible audience coverage, but this wide coverage may be a combination of groups in the following categories: age, sex, education, occupation, and socio-economic groups. We will make no attempt to analyze specific audience appeals—that in itself would take a book. We shall trace a few of the basic motivations as a guide for future study.

1. *Age.* Children seem to favor drama which is exciting and filled with action. Fast action and melodrama appeal to the active, imaginative child. The age of the listener seems to have little to do with the popularity of comedy programs—favorites of kids and grownups alike. Program series such as "The Lone Ranger," "Lux Radio Theatre," "Archie Andrews," "Let's Pretend," "Gang Busters," "Superman," "Jack Armstrong," "Dick Tracy," and "Mr. District Attorney" rank high as program preferences of both children and adults.

Most researchers agree that at fourteen or fifteen adult preferences for radio drama are beginning to become manifest. Adults seem to favor more realistic treatment in their favorite programs. They are inclined to be more critical in their demands for motivation than are children.

2. *Sex.* If present radio programs are any guide, we are forced to believe that women are generally more sentimental than men, and are definitely more emotional. Women control the listening during the morning and afternoon, children control late afternoon listening and exert strong evening pressures, and men control the early morning, evening, and nighttime listening.

3. *Education.* The average listener has not finished high school, and but a small percentage have completed college. A program aimed at highly educated listeners could pick up a good-sized listening audience in a large city, but would have a small potential

in smaller towns. Most sponsors sell a mass-produced item which is comparatively cheap. They depend on volume sales for corporate existence, so for this reason generally aim their shows to the middle and lower educational groups.

4. *Occupational*. Occupational or racial groupings are more likely to be considered by local stations. Stations serving areas where the listeners are skilled and semi-skilled laborers will cater to this group. A station serving a farm area will cater to farm families, etc.

5. *Socio-economic*. Surveys indicate that families in the very high and very low social and income brackets listen to the radio least. As the average social grouping and income bracket is approached from either end, the hours of listening become higher. As indicated above, most sponsors are interested in reaching a wide audience, and it is "the great middle class" which constitutes the bulk of loyal listeners.

It has been said that there is no such thing as a general audience—that the audience is always composed of special audiences—and to some extent it is true. The radio man recognizes this, and though he generally aims at a specific audience, his show is so constituted that it is of interest to those in peripheral groups.

SECTION TWO

ANALYZING
THE RADIO PLAY

CHAPTER

5

The Test

AN ORIGINAL PLAY FOR RADIO

BY JOSEPH RUSCOLL

THIS SECTION will attempt to clarify some of the material given in the preceding chapter by using it to analyze a specific radio play. Theory is in itself a useful tool only when it is applied—either for further theoretical study or in practical application. This section attempts, insofar as is possible through the medium of the written word, to make that application and to indicate further approaches.

The player should realize that he can never analyze the play completely, and that if he attempts a too mechanistic or scientific approach, he will not be taking advantage of his tools. A careful analysis, however, may very well enhance to a considerable degree the presentation of the play.

THE TEST

by Joseph Ruscoll

COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM

COLUMBIA WORKSHOP

SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 1942

2:30—2:55 PM, EWT

CUE: (*Columbia Broadcasting System* 30 sec.)

NARR.: What is your name, sir?

JOSEPH: (*Beaten.*) My name is Joseph Pike. I am 45, married, six children, and live in Denver, Colorado, with my wife Anna. I hate being 45, married, six children, and living in Denver, Colorado, with my wife Anna.

- NARR.: What is your occupation?
- JOSEPH: Salesman—bathroom fixtures.
- NARR.: And you hate that, too?
- JOSEPH: I hate that, too.
- NARR.: And what do you love?
- JOSEPH: I love New Haven, where I lived as a boy, Jennie Rand, whom I loved as a boy. And the boy.
- NARR.: That was thirty years ago?
- JOSEPH: That was yesterday. (*Sighs.*) I wish I was dead!
- NARR.: All right, Joseph, that's all for the time being. And now you, Madame—a synopsis of yourself, please?
- JANET: I am Mrs. Janet Wagschal.
- NARR.: Formerly Jennie Rand?
- JANET: Formerly Jennie Rand.
- NARR.: Go ahead, please.
- JANET: Now a childless widow—bitter, stout, middle-aged, Fall River, Mass., thirty years, but still a stranger to it—and to my husband Sam that was. New Haven's my home.
- NARR.: You were really young once?
- MUSIC: *Fade in a harmonica, playing "The Missouri Waltz," down and continuing.*
- JANET: (*In a hushed tremulous voice.*) His name was Joey. He played the harmonica. Joey Pike. And he never combed his hair. I've never loved anyone else—least of all Sam. (*In a tragic whisper.*) Sometimes I wish I was dead!
- NARR.: And you've never seen him since?
- JANET: Never.
- NARR.: And you really laughed once? And did your eyes flash and your teeth glisten?
- JANET: I was pretty as a picture. He played "The Missouri Waltz." He always kept playing it.
- NARR.: On his harmonica?

JANET: Yes. I was so happy then. His soul was full of music.
And my heart was full of joy.

MUSIC: *Suddenly stops.*

JENNIE: (*Now the youthful Janet.*) Go on Joey, finish it.
(*Trance-like.*)

JOEY: (*Now the youthful Joseph.*) Go home, Jennie. (*Mood-
ily.*)

JENNIE: (*Standing her ground.*) I won't either.

JOEY: Go ahead.

JENNIE: Make me!

JOEY: (*Sighs.*) That's all there is—there ain't no more.

JENNIE: (*Imploring.*) Please—play the rest of it—it's so lovely.

JOEY: Can't.

JENNIE: Why not?

JOEY: Makes me cry.

JENNIE: But not always.

JOEY: No.

JENNIE: You're sensitive, that's what.

JOEY: I know.

JENNIE: Are you in a mood?

JOEY: That's it.

JENNIE: Is it me again?

JOEY: Yes.

JENNIE: You love me very much?

JOEY: Yes.

JENNIE: So much that you close your eyes and stamp your feet
and clench your fists and your teeth and explode—
(*Sighs.*) And you love me even more than that?

JOEY: (*Huskily.*) Yes, Jennie. More than that.

JENNIE: Then play that tune again.

JOEY: I—can't.

- JENNIE: Is it Sam Wagschal again?
- JOEY: (*Writhing.*) Maybe.
- JENNIE: Do you still get a pain in your chest when I walk to school with him?
- JOEY: Maybe.
- JENNIE: Then play. 'Cause I decided I don't like him at all. I only walk with him once in a while out of pity for him being such a dunce. Play, Joey. He's not sensitive like you, he thinks money's everything and as soon as he finishes high school he's going to look for a job. Come on, Joey, start over. When I told him your philosophy—about just playing your harmonica through life, he laughed and called you looney. So you know what I did?
- JOEY: What?
- JENNIE: I slapped him.
- JOEY: (*Beaming.*) You did?
- JENNIE: Cross my heart—right in his face!
- JOEY: (*Gratefully—tremendously relieved.*) All right, Jennie—I'll play this one specially for you . . . some day I'm going to run away from home and go to Wyoming and play cowboy tunes on a horse. And I'll take you with me, Jennie . . . honest . . .
- MUSIC: *He plays in full the haunting strains of the "Missouri Waltz."*
- JENNIE: (*At its close.*) You're a genius, Joey Pike! (*Softly.*) And I do love you—very much. (*It is too much for Joey. He begins to sob, quietly.*) Don't cry, Joey . . .
- MUSIC: *Transition.*
- NARR.: And that was thirty years ago?
- JANET: (*Sighs.*) That was yesterday.
- NARR.: And you remember it so vividly?
- JANET: Word for word.

NARR.: And you, Joseph?

JOSEPH: Word for word.

NARR.: Well, what about some early background? Your folks, for instance.

JANET: Joey's Pa ran a hardware store.

JOSEPH: Jennie's was a waiter.

JANET: Yes, but only now and then. Kept losing job after job so he could stay home and paint pictures. Poor Ma.

JOSEPH: She was a frost-bitten one, all right.

JANET: Joey's Ma was dead, you know, guess that's what helped make him so—sensitive. His step-Ma tried pretty hard to win him over, but he wouldn't budge. Poor Joey.

NARR.: Well, let's get on with the story.

JANET: Then one day Sam Wagschal asked me to go to the school picnic with him, and when Joey heard about it, why, he asked me too. So I asked Ma and Pa for some advice and both had different opinions.
(*Fading.*) First I asked Ma and she said right off: "Sam" . . .

MRS. RAND: Of course go with Sam. I don't understand what you see in Joey. Why Joey?

JENNIE: I thought maybe because I love him.

MRS. RAND: Pshaw! It's that silly childish music of his got you hypnotized.

JENNIE: That, too.

MRS. RAND: That shiftless, good-for-nothing! Why, even his own father gives him up as a bad loss, Joey refusing to help out in the store after school and all. At least Sam's a hustler, he'll always make a living—has a good paper route, and the other day Mrs. Wagschal was telling me he's got the offer of a job soon's he graduates. In a woolen mill where his uncle's a foreman—somewhere in Mass.

JENNIE: Fall River.

MRS. RAND: That's right. But Joey! The whole neighborhood knows how lazy he is—you're the only one that sees anything in him—

JENNIE: (*Sighing.*) That's a fact.

MRS. RAND: What do you see in him?

JENNIE: A—a troubadour! That's what.

MRS. RAND: Fiddlesticks! The way he loafes around tootling that silly harmonica of his night and day—it was different when he was small, one made allowances—but now he's growing up you'd think he'd give up that nonsense—start amounting to something. Why, people say—

JENNIE: (*Hotly.*) People just don't understand him, Ma—he's—constituted different—

MRS. RAND: He reminds me too much of your father. What's Pa but a grown-up Joey?

JENNIE: That's true, Ma—never thought of it before.

MRS. RAND: That ought to be a lesson to you!

JENNIE: I don't know—maybe that's what I like about Joey.

MRS. RAND: Hush! You know the aggravation Pa's caused me. Some men drink, but he paints pictures. Loses every job he gets, because his mind ain't on his work. Many's the time I never knew where our next meal was coming from. I don't know but what I'd rather have a drinking man.

JANET: (*Chuckling.*) Good old Pa!

MRS. RAND: I'm warning you, child, take a leaf from me, look what I've gone through—Joey's another Pa—better go to the picnic with Sam.

JENNIE: (*Thinks it over, then, slowly.*) I'll ask Pa.

MRS. RAND: (*Snorts.*) Pa!

MUSIC: *Transition.*

MR. RAND: Joey!

JENNIE: (*Elated.*) Joey, Pa?

MR. RAND: Of course Joey! Why Sam? That nincompoop!

JENNIE: (*Blowing her breath out in relief.*) That's the way I feel. Whew! It's a great relief. Do you suppose I'm in love, Pa?

MR. RAND: (*Chuckles.*) What do you think?

JENNIE: Well, I'm sure I'm not in love with Sam—

MR. RAND: Naturally.

JENNIE: Even though he runs after me like a dog, and beats up all the boys that try to date me. He's too—too the same, Pa, you know what I mean?

MR. RAND: I know. You take after me, daughter—you'd be unhappy with someone—uh—too down-to-earth. See.

JENNIE: I see.

MR. RAND: And Joey?

JENNIE: (*With enthusiasm.*) Oh, Joey! He's—so—different . . . Do you think maybe I'm really and truly in love, Pa?

MR. RAND: (*Jovially.*) Well, now, that all depends—you're not very old, you know.

JENNIE: (*Cautiously—searching for a scientific answer to her emotions.*) Well—I tingle, for one thing. Is that love?

MR. RAND: You mean when you're with him?

JENNIE: When I'm with him—yes.

MR. RAND: When he's playing the harmonica.

JENNIE: Even when he's not.

MR. RAND: (*The probing is bringing interesting results.*) Oh.

JENNIE: And even when I'm not with him.

MR. RAND: You mean even when you just talk about him?

JENNIE: I mean when I even just think about him, I tingle.

MR. RAND: You tingle?

JENNIE: I tingle.

MR. RAND: I see.

JENNIE: Is that love, Pa?

MR. RAND: Well—

JENNIE: (*Sadly.*) And sometimes when I think of him—I want to jump to the top of a tree and shout and shout and shout—till I burst.

MR. RAND: (*Gravely.*) Sounds mightly like the genuine article.

JENNIE: (*Sighs.*) That's what I thought.

MR. RAND: And does he love you?

JENNIE: (*Confidently.*) Oh, yes.

MR. RAND: How do you know?

JENNIE: Well, sometimes when he's playing me a song on his harmonica, he all of a sudden stops and—cries, sort of, and when I ask him what's the matter, he says it's because he loves me so much he can't stand it.

MR. RAND: (*Considering.*) Hmm. How do you know it's not just his music doing things to him? Perhaps he can't stand too much of it at one time. Might be. How I happen to suggest that is I feel the same way sometimes when I'm painting.

JENNIE: (*Alarmed.*) Oh, Pa! You don't think it's me?

MR. RAND: I'm not saying one way or the other, but as a fellow-artist I can vouch for certain moments when you have to stand back, catch your breath and close your eyes—the beauty of your creation's too much for you. (*Jennie suddenly bursts into tears.*) What are you crying about?

JENNIE: It's not me at all! He don't love me at all!

MR. RAND: What makes you think so?

JENNIE: You just said so! It's his music he loves!

MR. RAND: I said no such thing. I merely said I could understand and appreciate such a mood, if such was the case.

JENNIE: (*Weeping afresh.*) There! You see?

MR. RAND: (*Comfortingly.*) Now, now, daughter—who can tell—maybe it is love that bowls our Joey over—

JENNIE: (*Reviving somewhat.*) You think so?

MR. RAND: Could be.

JENNIE: Not the harmonica?

MR. RAND: Maybe not. Can't tell.

JENNIE: (*Frantically.*) How can I tell?

MR. RAND: That's for you to decide, I'm afraid.

JENNIE: But how?

MR. RAND: I don't know—put him through a test.

JENNIE: A test?

MR. RAND: Sure—some kind of—test.

JENNIE: What kind?

MR. RAND: (*Sighs.*) Wish I knew what to tell you.

JENNIE: (*Desperately.*) But how can I tell which he loves best?
(*Wailing again.*) Me or the harmonica!

MUSIC: *Transition into harmonica, down and under.*

JENNIE: (*Stream-of-consciousness.*) A test! . . . A test! What'll it be! . . . An ordeal? Fire? Water? . . . What about a duel—with Sam Wagschal? No—(*Fading.*) Sam's too strong . . .

MUSIC: *Transition out into sound of harmonica down and continuing behind . . .*

NARR.: So you put him to the test, Mrs. Wagschal?

JANET: (*Sadly.*) Yes—I put him to the test. That's what parted us—I mean not that it really proved anything—It was really a silly, childish little test—(*Wretchedly.*) But that's why I'm here all these years in Fall River, Mass., a lonely widow with a broken heart. And Joey's—(*A catch in her voice.*) God knows where.

NARR.: And now about that test, Janet—But wait—first I'd like to hear a little more about Joseph's early history, since we've had a glimpse of yours—I'm sure our listeners-in would be glad to get a closer study of his relations with

his father and step-mother—Can you give us an intimate picture, Joseph?

JOSEPH: (*Reticent.*) Well—

NARR.: (*Encouragingly.*) Yes, Joseph? Needn't be shy, we're all your friends and want very much to understand you—really.

JOSEPH: There isn't really much to tell—

NARR.: Did she abuse you, Joseph—your step-mother?

JOSEPH: Oh, no—on the contrary—she meant awfully well—tried to get close to me—(*Fading.*)—more than I can say for my father.

MUSIC: *Transition . . . out under sound of harmonica playing softly . . .*

MR. PIKE: (*Shouting.*) Will you stop that noise!

MUSIC: *Ceases at once.*

MRS. PIKE: (*Chastingly.*) Ezra!

MR. PIKE: (*In self-defense.*) I've told him often enough I can't stand that infernal racket!

MRS. PIKE: Now, Ezra Pike, you've got to allow the boy some civil liberties.

MR. PIKE: (*Testily.*) Oh all right, Helen, all right—but how in thunder can I read the Sunday paper?

MRS. PIKE: (*Kindly.*) Go ahead, Joey. Play. (*No response.*) Play some more.

JOEY: (*Sullenly.*) Never mind. I don't feel like anymore.

MRS. PIKE: Please, Joey.

JOEY: (*Exasperated.*) Leave me alone! I don't feel like!

MR. PIKE: (*Flaring up angrily.*) Oh, you don't feel like! Well, I don't feel like! I don't feel like thinking what a son I got! I don't feel like looking at you!

MRS. PIKE: Ezra, you stop talking like that—or I'll leave the house!

MR. PIKE: (*Turning his wrath on his wife.*) You've helped spoil him, Helen—humoring him—I won't have it anymore—

a grown boy doing nothing but playing a harmonica when he should be helping me out in the store. For the last time, Joey, are you going to do some work in the store or not—answer me! . . .

JOEY: (*Miserably.*) I—I can't, Pa.

MR. PIKE: Why not?

JOEY: I told you. (*Revolted.*) Hardware! What do I know about hardware!

MR. PIKE: Wouldn't kill you to learn.

JOEY: (*Fiercely.*) It would! It'd kill my soul!

MRS. PIKE: (*With quiet determination.*) He's right. He's not going into hardware, Ezra, he's not meant for that.

MR. PIKE: Oh? Where is he headed for?

MRS. PIKE: He's going to Yale.

MR. PIKE: (*He is not averse to the idea.*) Well, I dunno—

JOEY: I'm not going to Yale.

MR. PIKE: (*Angrily.*) Not Yale either?

JOEY: No, sir.

MRS. PIKE: Of course you are, Joey, when you get through High. You've got to.

JOEY: No. Not Yale either.

MR. PIKE: (*Sneering.*) I suppose Yale would kill your soul too?

JOEY: Yes, it would. Trigonometry, and things like that.

MR. PIKE: (*Ready to burst a blood vessel.*) Well ye gods and little fishes!

MRS. PIKE: What do you intend to do, then?

JOEY: I'm going out West.

MRS. PIKE: (*Incredulous.*) Wh-at? What doing?

JOEY: I don't know. Ride a horse. Punch cows. I'm going to take Jennie Rand with me.

MR. PIKE: (*Cynically.*) Tommyrot!

- JOEY: And we'll just ride and ride—and I'll play my harmonica—
- MR. PIKE: That harmonica again! (*Beside himself with rage.*) Give it here! Once and for all!
- JOEY: (*Indignantly.*) I'll not!
- MR. PIKE: Hand it over!
- JOEY: Like fun!
- MR. PIKE: I'm going to throw it in the sewer—give me that piece of trash—that baby playtoy of yours!
- JOEY: (*Standing his ground.*) No sir!
- MR. PIKE: Give it to me at once or get out of my house!
- JOEY: (*After a pause.*) (*Quietly.*) I'll get out.
- MR. PIKE: Then get! (*Weakly, of a sudden.*) Where's the blasted baking soda, Helen? (*Sound of his footsteps receding, and of door banging shut behind him.*)
- MRS. PIKE: (*After a moment of silence.*) Don't mind him, Joey—he don't mean it.
- JOEY: I don't care. I'm going. If not today, tomorrow, or the next.
- MRS. PIKE: (*Tenderly.*) Joey—
- JOEY: (*Surly.*) What?
- MRS. PIKE: Why do you hate me?
- JOEY: I don't hate you—don't even hate Pa.
- MRS. PIKE: But you don't love me?
- JOEY: No.
- MRS. PIKE: (*Earnestly.*) Why? And why won't you ever play a song for me when we're alone? Didn't you play for your Ma when you were little?
- JOEY: (*Huskily.*) Yes.
- MRS. PIKE: Ain't I your Ma, now?
- JOEY: No.

MRS. PIKE: Why not? Why have you been—resenting me all these years—when I tried so hard to get near you?

JOEY: Because. Just because and that's all.

MRS. PIKE: (*Softly.*) Because I took her place?

JOEY: (*Choking.*) Maybe.

MRS. PIKE: (*Changing the subject discreetly.*) Who are you taking to the school picnic, Joey?

JOEY: Jennie Rand.

MRS. PIKE: Jennie's a sweet girl.

JOEY: You bet. And some day I'm taking her away with me—like I said. To Wyoming.

MRS. PIKE: Did she say she'd go to the picnic with you?

JOEY: (*Thinly.*) Well—uh—she didn't say yet. She's going to give me her answer tomorrow. (*Now frankly plumbing the depths of despairing suspense.*) It's between me and that darn Sam Wagschal!

MUSIC: *Transition.*

NARR.: And you lost, Joseph? Her answer was no—on that day thirty years ago?

JOSEPH: That's right, sir. She put me through a—a test—and found me wanting, you might say.

NARR.: Where'd you say you're located these days, Joseph?

JOSEPH: Colorado. Denver, Colorado.

NARR.: Salesman?

JOSEPH: Right.

NARR.: Bathroom fixtures?

JOSEPH: Right. Wonder what became of Jennie after she ran off with Sam? I'd give my right arm to know.

NARR.: And the test? What did it prove?

JOSEPH: (*Indignantly.*) Proved nothing! Darned childish that test was—but because of it she got mad and a few years later married Sam and went out of town. And

I was lonely and miserable and broken-hearted and I didn't want Yale or hardware and my Pa was too mean to me and my step-Ma was too good to me—and so after I graduated High I bummed my way out West. Before I could become a cowboy, though, I somehow got married to a telephone operator—blind date—I was lonely—you know—and settled down as a salesman—same job all these years—own my own home—wife Anna—good woman, never really loved her though, never anyone but Jennie—never!

NARR.: You say you've got five children, Joseph—or six?

JOSEPH: Six—five girls. Wonder what she's doing right now. Where she is and what she's doing.

NARR.: Who?

JOSEPH: Jennie. Right this minute.

NARR.: All right, Joseph, much obliged. And now Mrs. Wagschal—Janet—what about that famous little test you put him through? I'm sure all our listeners-in are waiting anxiously to hear about it at last.

JANET: Well, I was jealous of his harmonica all right, but at first I couldn't think up a good proof of his love—I thought maybe I ought to have him fight a bull or wrestle with an alligator—but at last I thought up a simple, common-sense test—a beautiful test that would go right to the heart of the matter—that would prove for sure whether he loved me or his harmonica. I wondered why I never thought of it before. (*Harmonica sneaks in playing "Beautiful Ohio."*) I was going to put it up to him as soon as I met him on the green that night—but right away he got to talking of Wyoming and then he got to playing a song and I got to humming it, and so I decided I'd wait till he was finished—then spring the test . . .

MUSIC: *Transition out under harmonica playing "Beautiful Ohio" and female voice humming accompaniment.*

JENNIE: (*When it is over.*) That was wonderful!

- JOEY: So will you go to the picnic with me, then?
- JENNIE: (*Sighs.*) Yes.
- JOEY: (*Rapturously.*) Oh, Jennie!
- JENNIE: If you pass the test. First you must do that.
- JOEY: All right. Go ahead and test me.
- JENNIE: You mean it?
- JOEY: Sure, go ahead.
- JENNIE: (*Gravely.*) This is for real.
- JOEY: Naturally.
- JENNIE: Ready?
- JOEY: Shoot!
- JENNIE: Give up your harmonica! Throw it away!
- JOEY: (*Unbelievably.*) Wh—at?
- JENNIE: Come on out to the corner and take your harmonica and throw it down the sewer and spit on it! And that'll prove you love me best. Like a holy sacrifice!
- JOEY: (*Trying to change the subject.*) And when we get out West, Jennie, we'll ride a tamed bronco, and we'll sing cowboy songs to the dogies—
- JENNIE: (*Insistently.*) Will you do it, Joey? Will you? Down the sewer? Right now?
- JOEY: (*Desperately holding fast to his deafness.*) And there'll be a harvest moon overhead—and it'll be listening . . .
- JENNIE: Will you, Joey? Will you?
- JOEY: (*Bursting out angrily.*) Don't be silly!
- JENNIE: (*Outraged.*) You refuse! Oh! That proves it! That proves it!
- JOEY: Proves what?
- JENNIE: That you don't love me at all! That it's your harmonica like Pa said! (*Bursts into tears.*)
- JOEY: It ain't either! It don't prove nothing . . .! Please don't

cry . . . I do, I do too love you . . . I'd do anything for you—anything—

JENNIE: (*Blubbing.*) Then make a holy sacrifice!

JOEY: Anything but that, I mean. Gosh, my poor little harmonica—down the sewer—gosh—what for? (*Almost in tears himself.*) Never did you any harm—And you used to say it was sweet as sugar—

JENNIE: It is.

JOEY: And that it sent you straight up in the sky a mile and a half—

JENNIE: It does.

JOEY: And makes you so sad you feel delicious.

JENNIE: That's right.

JOEY: Then why are you a traitor now?

JENNIE: Because—Look, Joey, you're jealous of Sam Wagschal, aren't you, you can't help it?

JOEY: Yeah.

JENNIE: Well—I'm jealous of—of your harmonica. And I can't help it.

JOEY: (*Writhing.*) But what'll I do without it?

JENNIE: (*Relenting a bit.*) All right, tell you what: Give it up for a year, then. Just a year.

JOEY: (*In anguish.*) A year!

JENNIE: (*Bargaining.*) A month, then.

JOEY: A month!

JENNIE: A week.

JOEY: A whole week!

JENNIE: I shan't go any lower, Joey Pike.

JOEY: Rats! I'll die!

JENNIE: What do you say—yes or no?

JOEY: God!

JENNIE: (*A final compromise.*) Oh, very well then, I don't want to make you too miserable. One day, make it. One teenie little day!

JOEY: (*Considering.*) Which one?

JENNIE: Tomorrow.

JOEY: (*Gloomily.*) All day?

JENNIE: All day.

JOEY: (*Silent for a while, then wretchedly.*) What'll I do when I wake up in the morning and the sun's coming in my room? . . . And outside when I'm walking along and it's good to be alive, and a tune comes in my head? What'll I do? . . . And at night, when I'm alone and it's all mysterious and dark and I wonder what it's all about. What then? Those are the times I got to play my harmonica most. What'll I do?

JENNIE: (*Impatiently.*) Joey Pike, I've put you to the test! Will I find you wanting?

JOEY: (*Lowly.*) This is pretty darn silly.

JENNIE: It's darn important to me.

JOEY: How you going to tell if I do or I don't?

JENNIE: (*Solemnly.*) Your word of honor.

JOEY: And if I don't do what you want?

JENNIE: Then I'll never speak to you again! As long as I live!

JOEY: (*Wretchedly.*) Oh.

JENNIE: And—and I'll go to the picnic with Sam Wagschal—that's what I'll do!

JOEY: I see.

JENNIE: Well? I'm waiting!

JOEY: I—I don't feel so good.

JENNIE: Yes or no? Quick! You will kindly decide your fate!

JOEY: (*After a terrific struggle with himself.*) No! I'm sorry, Jennie, but I can't. I just wouldn't. A whole day! I'd

get fidgety and I'd start playing absentminded—Couldn't help it. You might as well tell me to stop breathing!

JENNIE: (*After a long pause; sorrowfully.*) So that's your answer. You're not willing to make the holy sacrifice! All right. (*Hoarsely.*) Goodbye, Joey.

JOEY: Wait, don't go, Jennie!

JENNIE: (*Fiercely.*) Let me go! Take your hand off me!

JOEY: Please! Don't be mad! (*Voice breaks.*) Don't go away!

JENNIE: (*Hysterically.*) Let me alone! I never want to see you again! Don't you dare come to see me anymore! I hate you! I hate you!

MUSIC: *Transition.*

NARR.: And you never spoke to him again, Janet?

JANET: Never. (*Sorrowfully.*)

NARR.: Or you to her, Mr. Pike?

JOSEPH: I had my pride. (*Lowly.*)

NARR.: (*Sighs.*) And that was thirty long years ago?

JANET: (*Flaring up.*) Pride! If he really loved me, he wouldn't have had any pride!

JOSEPH: (*Flaring up in turn.*) And if she really loved me, she—what about her foolish pride?

JANET: (*Indignant.*) Foolish?

JOSEPH: (*Crying out.*) Foolish! Foolish!

JANET: What do you think, Mr. Narrator?

NARR.: (*Sadly.*) I think you were both very, very foolish.

JANET: (*Miserably.*) Well, I—I was waiting for him to make up first.

JOSEPH: (*In similar vein.*) I was waiting for her.

JANET: Plenty of times, when he passed me in the street—I wanted to. Oh, how I wanted to!

JOSEPH: (*In a choked voice.*) Jennie! You did? And so did I—I wanted to lie down on the ground and roll over at

your feet and tell you I'd do anything for you—anything!

JANET: (*Her voice, too, comes choked.*) Joey! You did?

JOSEPH: Plenty of times! Plenty!

JANET: I wanted to tell you I was sorry. I was dying to!

JOSEPH: It was all my fault!

JANET: No! No! It was mine! (*A pause, then.*) I had a miserable time at the picnic.

JOSEPH: I didn't even go.

JANET: I know. That's why.

JOSEPH: Once I rescued you from drowning and we made up. But it was a dream.

JANET: Once I gave you a great big ten dollar harmonica for a present, and we were patched up. But that was make-believe. Once I waited for you at school and walked home after you and threw roses on your footsteps. And that was real, except the roses.

JOSEPH: Once I sneaked into your back yard at night to watch the light in your room, and I fell asleep in the bushes and caught cold. I was sick for a week. That was all real! (*Sighs: a long silence.*)

NARR.: (*Softly.*) Time's almost up—better say goodbye.

JANET: (*Suddenly bursting into sobs.*) Oh, Joey! Joey!

NARR.: (*Tender, but firm.*) All right—that's all.

JANET: (*Sobbing broken-heartedly.*) Where are you, dear darling boy? Forgive me, forgive me!

NARR.: (*Crisply.*) That's all, now. Please, Janet—

JANET: (*As before.*) Joey!

NARR.: Mrs. Wagschal! Fade out, please! We're going off the air. There's nothing can be done about it at this late date.

(*Janet and her sobs fade out. A short silence, then.*)—

NARR.: You, too, Joseph.

- JOSEPH: (*Hollowly.*) Yes.
- NARR.: Goodbye.
- JOSEPH: (*Fading.*) Goodbye.
- NARR.: (*Calling.*) Oh, just a minute!
- JOSEPH: (*Fading in.*) Yes?
- NARR.: I was just wondering—do you still play the harmonica?
- JOSEPH: Oh, no. No.
- NARR.: You've given it up?
- JOSEPH: Long ago.
- NARR.: Why?
- JOSEPH: Oh, I don't know—(*forlornly.*)—stress and strain—(*fading out.*)—stress and strain—(*Silence, then*)—
- NARR.: That's about all, folks. (*Sighs.*) Good afternoon.
- MUSIC: *Curtain.*
- ANNCR: This is the COLUMBIA . . . BROADCASTING SYSTEM.



**The Test—
an analysis of
the form and structure**

IN THIS CHAPTER we put to use the tools of analysis which were described in Chapter 4. In making this analysis of *The Test* we shall keep in mind that our purpose is to find out about the play those things which will help us get a clearer and more complete idea of: what is said in the play, how it is said, and what is meant. We will neither chop off an arm or a leg in forcing the play to fit our method of analysis, nor will we force the analysis into the mold of this particular play. What we want to do is to single out those dominant characteristics which will enable us to recognize the qualities of the play with which we are working. We can then present it in the most effective manner.

LENGTH

IN THE FORM given here, *The Test* will run about twenty-five minutes, including sound and music. There will be little, if any, difficulty in presenting the story completely in the time allowed, for the plot is not complicated, scenes have been held to a minimum, and characters are presented and established very quickly. In their first speeches, for instance, Joseph and Janet describe themselves with such telling distinctness that it comes almost as a shock.

My name is Joseph Pike. I am 45, married, six children, and live in Denver, Colorado, with my wife, Anna. I hate being 45, married, six children, and living in Denver, Colorado, with my wife, Anna.

I am Mrs. Janet Wagschal . . . Now a childless widow—bitter, stout, middle-aged, Fall River, Mass., thirty years, but still a stranger to it—and to my husband Sam that was. New Haven's my home.

The other characters are also introduced succinctly. As the development of each is carried over a relatively short period of time in the flashback sequences, there is little character development, especially in the secondary characters.

PERIOD

FLASHBACKS are not unusual in radio drama, but in this particular play we have the relatively uncommon situation where the past sequences occupy much more time than do the present sequences. The flashbacks are concerned wholly with the causal events; the present events, with effect.

In addition to the disparity of time, we have a disparity of ages in the principal characters, a complete reversal in Joey's temperament, and two sets of mores with which to contend. For certainly the customs of the 1920's were somewhat different from those in the 1950's. If possible, attitudes of Joey's and Jennie's parents should be presented in light of their own times, yet made applicable to our own. In this play it is not difficult, for though their characters are not simple, the author has employed a high degree of selectivity in presenting those facets of their personalities which are universal in nature. He has accomplished this without weakening them as individuals; done a particularly good job of simplifying without stereotyping.

LITERARY TYPE

IN DISCUSSING the literary type of *The Test* we should first take into consideration the plot and characters. The story is quite closely knit, its elements lead naturally from one scene to another, and the whole is well cemented by narration, or narrative and expository dialogue.

With the exception of Joey (and to some extent Jennie), the characters are simplified. This simplification is by no means a stereotype. Jennie's mother is not merely the mean old mother, nor is

Joey's father a typical tyrant. Each of the secondary characters contribute strongly to the plot and action and exhibit quite complex characters, but their dominant attributes have been selected with an eye for continuity in action and plot and immediacy of effect, and thus they seem to be more simplified than they really are.

There are very few light spots in the play. In the scene between Jennie and her father, Jennie's description of her peculiar "tingle" when Joey is around is just about the only real humor in the whole play. Even this scene ends on a somber note, with Jennie's doubts again raised when her father injudiciously attempts to carry the conversation too far. There are a few scattered lines which could be considered a kind of domestic humor, such as those of Mrs. Rand in describing her husband. "Some men drink, but he paints pictures. . . . I don't know but what I'd rather have a drinking man." All in all, however, there is little humor of any kind in the play, and that little which does crop up is probably for the sake of variety as well as anything else.

The theme and treatment of the theme is essentially serious. One has the feeling that this exploration of the author into the cause and effect of a childhood incident misses the mark of tragedy, for the characters as they are given are less than tragic. The problem involved, that of the inability of many young people to adjust to an adult society, is certainly a serious one; but the extremely personal feeling generated for these particular young people lessens the impact of the problem as one that affects a large group of society. With these characteristics of the play in mind we may sum up our feelings as to its literary type thus:

Comedy. The elements which are associated with comedy are not generally present in *The Test*.

Farce. There are no elements of farce.

Melodrama. Though the plot is at times the dominating force, it is certainly secondary at other times. Action springs from the characters themselves and is quite well motivated. The characters are often simplified but they are not stock characters or stereotypes. Obviously then it is not melodrama. There is, however, one scene,

the recognition scene near the end of the play, which develops a kind of melodramatically sentimental appeal.

Tragedy. As stated above, the characters lack the kind of stature generally associated with tragedy. There are, to be sure, tragic elements in the problem, but the immaturity of Janet and Joseph both as youngsters and middle-aged people makes us conclude that the term "domestic tragedy" would be unsuited to this play.

Serious drama. To begin with, here is a play which is neither frivolous nor tragic. The characters lack heroic stature, but they miss this quality by inherent immaturity and lack of "drive" more than by the treatment which is afforded them. The ending does not resolve the problem nor suggest an amiable solution, as is generally the case with serious drama. The finality of the ending is probably more closely associated with tragedy. The story line is a combination of plot and episode, as is so often the case in serious radio drama. It is in the main representational, for only in a comparatively few lines do we have the audience involved by the narrator.

This play does not follow exactly those elements which are found in the average serious dramas, but certainly the above-mentioned excursions into some elements of tragedy, sentimental comedy, and melodrama do not detract from the overall effect. As a matter of fact, they not only provide contrast but aid in directing the audience to a better understanding and appreciation of the play; for each exerts separate impacts—tragedy, seriousness; sentiment, universality; melodrama, stimulus—that definitely add to the play. Here, however, we have most of the elements of serious drama, and as such would it be played.

SUBJECT MATTER OR CONTENT

OF THE SIX SUBDIVISIONS given under this heading, three are patently out—historical, biographical and society. Romantic, domestic, and social content are each present in varying degrees.

Romantic. The motivation of the story is certainly based upon the romantic relationship between Jennie and Joey. But the love we see is a most immature love.

Domestic. The people whom we meet in the play are quite average in their attitudes and outlooks as well as in their social and economic positions. Joey's father is a small business man, and talks and acts like one. His stepmother, more gracious, epitomizes the "poor thing—tries so hard but she certainly took on something when she married Mr. Pike." Mrs. Rand, disillusioned and bitter. Mr. Rand, disillusioned perhaps, but more benevolent in his attitude toward his fellow men. Joey and Jennie, young and old—every character is the product of a middle-class environment and quite ordinary in the eyes of the other folk in the community. This is a story about average people.

Social. There are in this play definite overtones of the problem of orienting young people to the society in which they must live. But it would be dangerous to read into the play more social philosophy than the author intended.

It is quite probable that all three: romantic, domestic, and social, are about equally important in this play.

STYLE

IN COMMON WITH MOST radio drama, *The Test* is basically representative, or illusionistic. The audience is generally called upon to imagine that the action is actually taking place. Not all the scenes have an equal degree of illusion, however. For instance, the short scene in which the narrator says, "And now, Mrs. Wagschal—Janet—what about that famous little test you put him through? I'm sure our listeners-in are waiting anxiously to hear about it at last," there is a kind of direct address which, though still representational, is nevertheless an approach toward the presentational. This illustrates the fact that in *The Test*, as in most good radio plays, there may be, and generally are, different degrees of illusion in different scenes. This difference in illusion is directly tied in with Perspective (see Chapter 8).

When we attempt a decision as to the production style to be employed, our job is made more difficult because of the past and present components of the story. Not only is there a difference in time, but there is a difference in the degree of reality employed in the

two sets of scenes. One set is real, New Haven, 30 years ago; the other set less real, somewhere, now. There are no elements of classicism or romanticism, except insofar as sentimentalism, being an offshoot of romanticism, is somewhat apparent. Those which do apply are: realism, sentimentalism, and experimentalism.

Realism. In both the flashbacks or past sequences and the present sequences there is the definite attempt to give the illusion of real life. The play is made more real by the narrator's picking only those specific incidents out of the past lives of his two subjects which lead naturally to the conclusion of the play. Thus he asks Janet to tell about her home life, and in turn requests the same from Joseph. He asks Janet to describe the test which she put to Joey and asks for the reactions of each to the result of it. We expect a certain amount of selectivity in realism, but here we have a very high amount.

Sentimentalism. Sentimentalism tends to look at the world through rose-colored glasses, which certainly is not true in this play—yet there is a rationalization implied in the backward glances that Joseph and Janet are taking. Each seems to believe that if things had turned out so that they could have continued through life together that they would have been happy. When the veil is lifted in the closing sequence, there are strong tendencies toward the sentimental and melodramatic. There seems here a conscious effort (on the part of the author) to bring forth a few tears from the listener. This is not a mawkish sentimentalism, however, but rather a tender kind of realization of thwarted love which mellows us even though we are not sure that the principals deserve to have consummated their love for each other.

Experimentalism. The reason one has the feeling of the experimental or non-traditional style is the element of fantasy in the play. This element of the unnatural is presented in the first minute or two of the play, and upon it is predicated the rest of the action. The fact that Janet and Joseph are here together, that they are unaware of each other's presence, that at the end the veil between them becomes less opaque, that the narrator has the power of disposing of them at the end of the appointed time—these tend to

give enormously imaginative implications to the story; and these implications are unnatural to the prior experience of the listener.

In summarizing the three styles which are inherent in *The Test*, we find that realism outweighs the other two. If, however, we disregard the sentimentalism and fantasy, we lose much of the dramatic impact of the play. Each makes its contribution. Sentimentalism adds charm; fantasy lends impact; and realism, flavor, interest, and believability. Inasmuch as realism is predominant, our presentation is geared around the selective approach to reality that is indicated. To add the universal implications of sentimentalism, we are carefully sympathetic with the frustrations of our characters. To lend dramatic impact we enclose the whole in the tough but filmy gauze of the "probable impossible."

FACTUAL BASIS

THE UNUSUAL NATURE of this particular play made it necessary to consider its factual basis in the discussion of style. It should be apparent by now that none of the categories in this analysis are mutually exclusive, and that each has more or less bearing on the others. The relationship between the style and the factual basis is not, however, generally so pronounced in most radio plays as it is in this one.

We note that although this play is fantasy, the approach is so realistic that we must be most careful to differentiate between that fantasy which is chimerical and diaphanous, and the present use which is softly realistic. Even though we realize the play is a fantasy, it becomes a real story about real people.

DRAMATIC SEQUENCES

The Test is a continuous performance. No breaks in the continuity of action are implied. There are ten scenes, divided equally into past and present sequences. Following is a synopsis of the scenes:

1. Present. Narrator, Joseph, Janet. Introduces characters of all present sequences. Establishes motivations for bringing in flashback sequences. Sets time factor and gives motivation for the mood of the play.

2. Past. Joey, Jennie. Introduces Joey and Jennie, sets their characters and establishes the relationship between them.
3. Present. Narrator, Joseph, Janet. Reinforces close tie between Jennie and Joey, and serves to introduce other characters, especially Mr. and Mrs. Rand.
4. Past. Jennie, Mrs. Rand. Establishes relationship between Jennie and her mother, and points up Joey's character.
5. Past. Jennie, Mr. Rand. Shows the close relationship between Jennie and her father, points up the young love of Joey and Jennie, and motivates the test sequence.
6. Present. Narrator, Joseph, Janet. Introduces Mr. and Mrs. Pike.
7. Past. Joey, Mr. Pike, Mrs. Pike. Shows those factors of home life which had a direct bearing on shaping Joey's later actions.
8. Present. Narrator, Joseph, Janet. Short recapitulation of adult characters of Jennie and Joey. Further exposition on Joseph's background. Introduces test sequence.
9. Past. Joey, Jennie. The test sequence. Crisis of play. Split-up between Joey and Jennie.
10. Present. Narrator, Joseph, Janet. Climax of play. The web of dreams is crushed.

DEVELOPMENT

WE HAVE LEARNED that there are three basic methods of developing a play—by plot, episode, or a combination of the two. The three major distinguishing characteristics of the plot plan are continuous story line, logical development of action and characters, and contiguous scenes closely interwoven. The latter two are most applicable in *The Test*. The distinguishing characteristics in the episodic mode of development are that contiguous scenes are not dependent on each other, but are closely interwoven. In *The Test* there exists a combination of these two forms, or episodic plot development, in which:

There is logical development of characters and action, and

Contiguous scenes, though not dependent on each other are closely interwoven.

As a matter of fact, the continuity of action is remarkably strong in most instances because of the motivating and blending of the flashbacks by narration and present action.

TIME COVERED

THE PLAY is divided into two time sequences—the present, and the past of thirty years ago. The present sequences cover merely the time involved in telling the story. The flashbacks are so closely related to each other that the question of time does not arise. Presumably, however, only a few days are involved.

PREDOMINANT ELEMENT

MOST OF THE predominant elements listed in Chapter 4 are represented to some degree in most plays. If, when we are examining the play, we write down those attributes of the play which fall under each heading, it will be much easier to see just which elements are predominant, and the true nature of the play will be much more apparent.¹

Plot. In *The Test* the exposition is quite direct. The narrator asks leading questions and Joseph and Janet give straight answers. The background for both the present and the past scenes is given succinctly. The use of three persons in the opening scene and the positive bitterness of Joseph and Janet add color to what could have been an ordinary bit of necessary explanation.

The over-all conflict or struggle is not well defined. One could properly point out large areas of conflict. For instance:

The sensitive and artistic youth struggling against a materialistic world.

The age-old struggle for dominance between the male and the female.

Actually, either of these could be pursued to the satisfaction of the audience and the player, but let us take a second look at the play before we decide exactly how the over-all conflict is best exemplified. Certainly there is much which is typical in Jennie's attempt to bring Joey into line. And Joey exhibits those normal tendencies of the

¹ Some of the material which would ordinarily be considered here is reserved for use in the succeeding chapter as an introduction to the analyses of specific characters.

sensitive young person who feels that everyone, even his best girl, is conspiring to make him conform to a prosaic society which he feels would stifle him. But we must decide whether Joey is a sensitive young artist or whether he is merely a young lad whose dream world is the strongest factor of his life. And inasmuch as the Joey-Jennie scenes are flashbacks, we should consider their relation to the scenes of the present.

There is nothing in Janet or Joseph which leads us to suspect that the creative or appreciative aspects of their characters have matured. In other words, it is hinted that Joey is artistic in nature and that Jennie has the power of artistic appreciation. But in the Janet and Joseph we see now, there is little to remind us of their former sensitivity. If adult criteria are applied to the children in the flashbacks, we find them understandably immature. We wonder, however, if these particular people, especially Joey, ever really tried to adjust themselves to the world; or whether their daydreams and fantasies have played a major role even in their adult lives.

A complete analysis of the characters comes later, but we have seen enough to indicate that there is here a commentary both on the inflexible mold of prosaic existence, and the inflexible characters of sensitive children set down in a world which places the highest values upon material things. The over-all conflict lies primarily in the characters and wills (pride) of the two young people, and secondarily in the conflict between the actuality of the world and the dream castles of youth.

That there is a definite personal conflict is several times hinted, but the actual conflict is really not apparent until the complication scene in which Jennie, seeking from her father reassurance that her love is real, finds instead a new uncertainty. In an effort to banish these new fears, Jennie decides to put Joey to a test, to find out whether it is she or the harmonica which he loves best.

The test sequence is really the crisis of the play. It is here that the specific conflict in the clash of wills between Jennie and Joey takes place. It is here also that the groundwork is laid for the recognition scene which follows immediately.

The climax of the play comes in the recognition sequence in which

the veil loses some of its opaque qualities, and Janet and Joseph become aware of each other's presence. This is, of course, a dramatic device—an illusion of fantasy—but it carries the crisis through to a fitting climax. For it is here that they recognize that the myths and legends and castles in the air which have been their last mental and emotional holds upon a faded dream, have vanished into the thin and tenuous reaches of the atmosphere from which such things come. They now realize that it is too late to go back. This is the end of their dreams, hopes, aspirations; and the inexorability of their positions sends their private worlds crumbling to dust.

Characters. When we have finished reading *The Test* or listening to it in production on the air, we feel that we are pretty well acquainted with the people in it. The characters seem very vivid to us for two reasons: first, their traits have been well selected; and second, before each appears he is graphically introduced by means of a capsule characterization.

Although we realize that the people we meet in the play have complex personalities, only those traits of character which are directly associated with the play are given. These simplified characterizations do not, however, detract from the play. There is such a succession of bull's-eyes that the quality makes up for any lack of quantity.

Some, however, may feel that there is a lack of motivation for certain actions. Why, for instance, does Mrs. Pike defend Joey so vigorously against her husband? Why does Mr. Pike respond as he does to Joey's playing of the harmonica? Why does Jennie, who seems so desperately in love with Joey in the first flashback scene, tantalize him as to whether she will go to the picnic with him? The answer could be made that these are all "natural" or "ordinary" reactions, and to a great extent this is true. It is probable, however, that particular care will have to be taken in making them sound motivated.

Theme and idea. There is an innate streak of stubbornness in both Joey and Jennie, and each has an inordinate amount of pride. Joey has more perhaps; at least we are more aware of it because of the content of the scene between his parents and himself. The moral

of this play might well be the old saw "Pride goeth before a fall." But perhaps there is a little more to it. Considering that the play as a whole is a bit elevated (by machinery and device to be sure—but even so, elevated), it might not be improper to look for a theme which is also a little elevated.

That theme may, perhaps, be best expressed in one word, "moderation." Moderation, with its connotations of tolerance and forbearance, is generally the most fruitful of the courses, and in this case by refusing to heed their wishes and dreams ("—I wanted to lie down on the ground and roll over at your feet and tell you I'd do anything for you—," "I wanted to tell you I was sorry. I was dying to!") the young people were rewarded with lives of unhappiness, remorse and feelings of guilt. Though the theme may be somewhat moralistic, the author does not insist on it—he has put it down; let it speak for itself.

Mood. Attention has been called to the lack of humor in *The Test*. In the present sequences there is none at all, and the mood is one of despair and remorse. The past sequences do not have the gloom and defeat which characterize the others, but right from the first the serious aspects of the play are emphasized. In the first flashback scene between Joey and Jennie the solemnity of their feelings is given full play, with only a hint of lightness in Jennie's description of her bout with Sam Wagschal. In the scene between Jennie and her mother, Mrs. Rand's bitterness, clearly apparent, stifles any suggestion at levity except, perhaps, in the previously mentioned speech concerning Mr. Rand's excursions with the brush. The scene between Jennie and her father has one or two little light touches at the beginning, but in the latter half Jennie is more miserable than ever. In the scene at the Pike household, a domestic crisis is narrowly avoided, and in the final flashback, the test leads to a real break. The overall mood is certainly not of a pastel shade.

Environment. Neither Joey nor Jennie lived in an environment that was particularly peculiar. Jennie's parents were financially restricted, due to Mr. Rand's proclivity toward the artistic. Mr. and Mrs. Pike were comfortable—no more. In the comfortable confines

of the New Haven of the 1920's there was little that was out of the ordinary. The scenes showing the home lives of Jennie and Joey give us reason to believe that they were not of the happiest. It is quite possible that in Joey's case his home environment may have contributed strongly toward his false pride. Jennie was probably influenced by her mother, no matter how strongly she disagreed with her in her treatment of and feelings toward Mr. Rand. The home environments of Jennie and Joey are the primary clues we have toward their actions and reactions.

Janet and Joseph have sketchily filled in their present-day environments, and again we have a little more on Joseph, for his is probably the more important character. Janet, now a widow, is still a stranger to Fall River—after thirty years. Joseph sells bathroom fixtures in Denver, though a hardware store in New Haven was repugnant to him. He is quite married—six children—to a “good woman” whom he has never really loved. Each would now agree that New Haven was Heaven.

Setting. The non-realistic setting is a device used by the author to present the story in the way he wishes to present it. It is a most effective device which does not call attention to itself, except perhaps at the very end when the time limit on the program is given for an excuse to end the show, and even then the attention is effectively diverted by the short “kicker” at the end.

Toward a predominant element. Let us briefly summarize the contributions under each heading and then evaluate them. We will thus have a concise picture from which to make our decision as to which element or elements predominate.

PLOT:	Direct and dramatic exposition. Little foreshadowing. Over-all conflict not absolutely defined, but the audience is aware of a “dramatic tension.” Complication brought out well. Crisis is most effective, as is climax. No denouement.
CHARACTERS:	Vividly drawn. Traits well selected and graphically presented. Lack of character progression in the separate sequences (past and present). Definite lack of motivations in the actions of some characters.

THEME AND IDEA:	Strong indications of theme in approach, but it may be that it is less explicit than it should have been. Little is done to suggest definitive audience response.
MOOD:	Very strong overtones of unhappiness, remorse, and guilt complex, made doubly effective by the almost complete lack of humor or lightness.
ENVIRONMENT:	Strong emphasis on the effect the home life had upon the principals, but lacks an expressed tie-in between that environment and the story line or characters. The relationship is implied.
SETTING:	Most unusual use of device to provide for dramatic effectiveness. We feel that it is a "method" rather than an inherent "means."
ACTION:	Little importance.
RHYTHM:	Little importance.

Just as there is never "only one right way" to present a play or interpret a character, so there may be differences of opinion on what the predominant elements are. If, however, the above contributions and summaries are indicative, it would seem that plot, mood, characters, and setting are the strongest elements. The themes, though strong, are not emphasized. Despite its structural deficiencies and omissions, plot seems to be the strongest element. Setting, though patently a device, incorporates such unusual features that it also looms very strongly. In my opinion plot is predominant, with setting strongly secondary. Character, also strong, would be taken into every possible consideration as reinforcement to setting, while mood reinforces plot. Thus the lack of definitude in conflict would be made up by the unhappiness and remorse which also makes for the somberness of mood. The vivid characters would compensate to a large degree for a tendency toward artifice in setting. This play excellently illustrates how each element complements and reinforces the others.

STRUCTURAL STYLE

The Test was originally written for and presented on the "Columbia Workshop," a distinguished series with few parallels in American broadcasting. Conceived and executed as a showcase and develop-

ing plant for new talent, ideas, and production methods, the "Workshop" became the creative (but not financial!) Mecca for radio artists. Because its function was primarily experimental, most of the plays presented were of a kind that generally did not find outlet in regular commercial channels. The plays were often characterized by the use of many new techniques, both in writing and production. *The Test* conformed strongly to other representative "Workshop" shows in type, style, and method of presentation.

There is no reason, however, that this play could not be presented on other series which aim for different audiences and generally employ different types of plays. It is unique, certainly enough, but it has many of the qualities of universality (sentiment, disappointment, unhappiness, tenderness, pain, suffering) which are understood and appreciated by most persons.

STRUCTURAL FORM

The Test is a conventional drama, unusual in the method employed in developing the plot, and incorporating, as we have noted, an imbalance in the use of flashback materials.

We have stressed this imbalance in the present and past elements, because of its effect on the presentation of the play. However, radio, a highly plastic medium, lends itself admirably to unusual structures; indeed, the "unusual" is the norm for much good radio drama.

PURPOSE

THE THEME of *The Test* is based on the somewhat moralistic terms of moderation and pride, but this does not mean that the purpose of the play is to preach or sermonize. It does, however, emphasize the attempt at serious entertainment which is inherent in most serious drama. There seems to be no doubt that the author is attempting to capture both our imaginations and our critical faculties at one and the same time. The style of the play, the appeals to the emotions that embellish the picture in the audience's minds, the climax in which a measure of pain is the only reward—these constitute a direct reflection and comment upon the mores of our civilization, yet are so gently put that the irrevocability carries only that sting which the individual listener himself provides.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

THE UNUSUAL formistic elements of *The Test* indicate that probably it would appeal to a less general audience than the ordinary run-of-the-mill radio play. As has been stated, however, there are many sentimental elements and elements of suspense which would appeal to a much larger group. There are few, if any, appeals to a particular educational or social or economic class; but the most appreciative audience would undoubtedly be adults. There is little to indicate that there would be a primary appeal to either sex, for although, as any amateur psychologist will tell you, women have a tendency to romanticise previous romances, men also have an inordinate capacity for so glossing up old loves in new lights that they begin believing their own stories.

In summary: *The Test* is a half-hour, modern, serious drama, embodying domestic conflict, presented representationally in realistic style. It is, despite the serious overtones and inherent realism, based on such an unreal situation that it should be considered a fantasy. There are: one introductory sequence, six minor sequences, and three short transitional sequences. The play, in one act, plays straight through; but the flashback sequences take place thirty years previously. Plot and setting are the predominant elements, in this unit play in a series. *The Test* is conventional in its structural form, and attempts serious, dramatic entertainment for a mature, adult audience.

The Test— analyzing the characters

IN OUR ANALYSIS of the characters in *The Test* (or any other play), our primary aim is to explore each one thoroughly, and at the same time retain our perspective of the play as a whole. We shall attempt a definitive analysis, but guard against reading into the characters attributes and qualities which do not or can not exist. Many of their less important characteristics will not be apparent to the listener. But it is only by discovering the minor character traits that we will be able to select for presentation those qualities that best describe the character, fit him into his surroundings in the play, and enable him to act in accordance with those situations and stimuli which motivate him throughout the play.

Perhaps our first job is to take a preliminary look at the persons whom we meet.

Joey is fifteen, in love with *Jennie* and with his harmonica, and disinclined to think realistically about the future.

Jennie is the same age (presumably), loves *Joey*, but is warmly demanding that *Joey* return her love to the exclusion of his dreams.

Joseph Pike—the adult *Joey*—is bitter, disillusioned. But he is not sure of exactly what he has lost, and cannot explain why.

Janet Wagschal understands now what she has lost, but still does not understand why.

Mrs. Rand, *Jennie*'s mother, has been forced by economic necessity to be a realist. But she probably would have been one anyway.

Mr. Rand, *Jennie*'s father, is a gentle but not always understanding parent. He is a visionary in a world which rewards most those who digress least.

Mr. Pike, Joey's father, is a "practical" man. A thing is either right or wrong with him. And no "ifs, ands, or buts."

Mrs. Pike is a second wife and a stepmother. Hers is an old problem.

The Narrator is a most sympathetic person who exhibits an omniscience which is peculiarly tempered with very human qualities.

These are the persons who make up the cast of characters in this drama of disillusionment. Before delving deeply into the characterizations, let us first relate them to the play and to each other. In the preceding chapter we made some examination of the over-all areas of conflict. They were:

The sensitive, artistic youth struggling against a materialistic world.

The age-old struggle for dominance between the male and the female.

In order to relate these over-all conflicts to the more personal natures of the particular characters, let us look at some specific conflicts so as to learn how each character fits into the web of the plot.

There is a direct struggle between Jennie and Joey over the question of the harmonica. This is the most obvious and extrinsic conflict in the play.

Perhaps as obvious but not so immediately conclusive is the conflict between Joey and his parents. At first glance it would seem that this is a contributory conflict which, together with Joey's other emotional and logical disturbances, motivates him later.

Jennie is tortured by inward doubts and fears, wanting reassurance of love and affection and demanding that this assurance be made vocal and real.

Mr. and Mrs. Rand are in eternal conflict with each other. One is realistic, the other a dreamer. Mrs. Rand is hounded by her deeply rooted concept of that kind of orderliness which means a husband who works from eight until five and spends his spare time in working around the house. To Mr. Rand it is equally important that a man's soul be fed the beautiful and that his mind have the necessary time for reflection.

And in the Pike household a woman is fighting for another kind of security—an outlet for her natural feelings of love and compassion and for the desire to be a mother and wife in deed, as well as in name.

Having looked at the characters, even if only briefly, and recognized the bases of conflict, we can explore the question of whether fate, in the form of the antagonist, has encircled Joey and Jennie, as joint protagonists, or whether the play indicates merely that Joey is the protagonist and Jennie the antagonist. Does this play aim primarily to show how a web of circumstance may be woven about two small and insignificant people and choke off their chance for happiness? Is there an over-all pattern of fate which dooms small people such as these? Is this an attempt to show the effects of society upon the little people? Is it an embodiment of sociological principle in personality conflicts?

Though the amount of time devoted to an individual does not necessarily determine his total importance in the play, it is indicative. Certainly the spotlight, from the beginning to the end, is focused upon Joey. Except for the narrator, he is the first person we meet and the last one we hear. His life is more thoroughly explored in both the present and past sequences. He is the chief, if not the only protagonist.

It is with relationship to Jennie that the difficult decision must be made. If the decision is that there is a web of fate or circumstance in operation, then we must decide whether Jennie is the tool or the trigger. If we decide that fate does not enter in, then Jennie is palpably the antagonist.

Although any conclusion we come to could be changed in light of new concepts obtained in the detailed analysis of each character, we are by now justified in setting down certain points which should guide our thinking as to the alignment of characters in the over-all conflict.

1. There is a definite emphasis, both in exposition and dialogue, on the environment of the characters.
2. Strong elements of remorse, unhappiness, and guilt complexes are evident in both the past and present sequences, but are strongest in the present.
3. There is an obvious conflict between Joey and several aspects of his world.

4. Jennie's pattern of thinking suggests the inherent pattern of female thought toward elements of romantic gratification and assurance.
5. There are overtones of the struggle between male and female for dominance.
6. There are implications of evaluation of the material and non-material.
7. There is the element of pride, both as an underlying and a motivational force.
8. There is an obvious element of direct conflict between Joey and Jennie.
9. Neither Joey nor Jennie exhibits a mature perspective as a youngster, nor does either, as an older person, exhibit a critical or mature perspective, even in retrospect.

These points may definitely be resolved, as will be any apparent conflict in the choice of the protagonist and antagonist, if we understand that *The Test*, like most good plays, is capable of being presented and understood on several levels. This play was written for the kind of audience which enjoys and is able to appreciate the more subtle types of dramatic art. But there was no effort to play down those characteristics which are enjoyed and appreciated by the majority of people. For although in *The Test* there are very strong elements of conflict between society and the man, the "human interest angle" is not subordinated. It would be naïve to call this play either a great social document or a sweet little story. In reality, it is neither—and a little of both. For as we have seen in listing the points above, the author has deliberately included those universal elements of conflict with the world as antagonist, and also personal elements of conflict with Jennie as antagonist.

It seems to me that the best approach would be to produce the play as a comment upon our present-day world, a comment in which Joey assumes the unwitting and unwilling role of protagonist, and Jennie as antagonist. You see, these are little people, immature, unimportant to the world in general. But inasmuch as they reflect the pattern of culture, the mores of our time, and the inflexible criteria of our existence, they assume a stature all out of propor-

tion to that which they hold in real life. This, it seems to me, is what the author is really saying.

If we assume a small and personal conflict between the two—Joey and Jennie—the play loses most if not all of the appeal of its serious treatment. It could indeed be better presented as a sentimental or romantic little love story, were this the case. By approaching the play as a comment, we are able to resolve satisfactorily both the special conflicts (pride, moderation, guilt complexes, etc.) and the general conflicts (environment, dominance of sex, material evaluation, etc.). The meat of the play will not be spoiled, nor will the less meaty sections lose their savour.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER ANALYSES ¹

Joey. The narrator's question "That was thirty years ago?" helps us to fix the time that the past scenes take place and give us Joey's age. We meet him then, as a fifteen-year-old, probably a sophomore in high school, living in New Haven. Though we are more concerned with Joey's mental and emotional traits than we are with his physical characteristics, we are told by Jennie that he never combed his hair, and that Sam Wagschal could lick him. Mrs. Rand's description of his lazy habits would give us some indication of his disregard of personal appearance. But to Joey, neatness would be far removed from godliness.

When we first meet Joey, we are struck by what seems to be his sensitivity. Jennie remembers him as having a soul full of music and a heart full of joy. In parts this is most believable, for in the first past sequence, Joey is visibly affected by his own music. He becomes moody and is so overcome by his emotions that he must stop playing—otherwise the sadness of the music would make him cry. Joey's moods, changing as they do in this first sequence from sadness

¹ Inasmuch as there is such a definite gap in time between the present and past sequences, the characters of Joey and Jennie will be discussed separately from those of Joseph and Janet. There is another reason: that of the close relationship between Joey and Jennie, and the distant relationship of Janet to Joseph. Joey and Jennie must, however, be related to their adult counterparts, for though progressions in their characters are not explicit in the dialogue of the script, they are inherent and implicit.

to happiness, seem quite believable, for they are carefully integrated with the opening exposition and the dialogue.

Even in the first sequence, however, the possibility of doubt appears. The element of immaturity is tellingly introduced in Jennie's recount of Joey's philosophy, "just playing your harmonica through life." It is this characteristic which we find most strongly woven into the plot and the character. For, although one is ever willing to forgive, even encourage, the visions of youth, Joey is so impractical that from the beginning he is put in a negative light. But Joey needed no encouragement. His ruling passions were his harmonica, daydreams, and Jennie—possibly in that order. Daydreams, though they be natural with youngsters, seem to play such a strong role with Joey that they become refuges in fantasy, rather than healthy longings. Joey wants "to run away from home and go to Wyoming and play cowboy tunes on a horse." Of course, he wants to take Jennie with him, but he seems to give no thought to oats for the horse, much less for Jennie and himself.

Joey shows little capacity toward adjusting his thoughts toward the future. In his revolt against parental guidance, he refuses to go to Yale, because college consists of "Trigonometry, and things like that." So it does, but there are compensations of the type that Joey should, by now, recognize.

This kind of immature thinking is evident from the beginning in Joey's overabundance of emotion. He is jealous of Sam Wagschal. When Jennie tells Joey she loves him, it is too much, and he openly sobs; and from Jennie's description to her father we gather that this is not an unusual occurrence. He cries out against his father's suggestion of working in the hardware store, "It'll kill my soul!" Could he really have believed that? Or was he trying to dodge an unpleasant idea?

These evidences of emotional instability are probably the reasons why Joey comes into conflict with all his surroundings. How does he combat these influences? By withdrawing into a world of fantasy all his own—dreaming of himself out West with Jennie; riding a tamed bronco, singing cowboy songs to the dogies while a harvest moon listens benignly overhead. Such ideas as these are responsible

for Mrs. Rand's castigation of him, "shiftless good-for-nothing." She adds final authority with "The whole neighborhood knows how lazy he is. . . ." and Jennie must agree with a sigh, "That's a fact."

The element of pride enters quite strongly into the conflict between Jennie and Joey. Each was stubborn; each waited for the other to make the overture. Though the stubbornness of each is played up in this particular instance, Joey is stubborn in his relations with everyone else in the play. His stepmother tries her very best to be a real mother to Joey. He will, however, have none of it, even though it is apparent that he yearns for motherly love. Indeed, his father accuses his stepmother of having spoiled him. Mr. Pike is perhaps overly aware of his son's deficiencies, "I don't like thinking what a son I got!" Even so, Joey seems to go out of his way to infuriate his father. He will not give in to his father, even though he should know that his father would later relent. He will not surrender to Jennie, whom he loves, the satisfaction, no matter how silly, of even one day's abstinence from his harmonica.

It would seem that Joey is not a particularly admirable person, but certainly we must be careful not to paint him in tones too somber, for the radio audience is used to some light, even in the darkest play. We must realize that the playwright has been exceedingly careful not to sentimentalize the character of Joey, and we must not negate his approach. But we must not be too harsh in our analysis, for, to some listeners he is "just a kid after all," and his sins are in the main sins of omission rather than commission. He is not deliberately or inherently bad; he is perhaps over-powered by his own fancies. Let us then open our eyes to his perversity, rebelliousness, and immaturity; but let us not close our eyes to the possibility that he could, perhaps, have had the makings of a truly artistic individual.

"What'll I do when I wake up in the morning and the sun's coming in my room? . . . And outside when I'm walking along and it's good to be alive, and a tune comes in my head? What'll I do? . . . And at night, when I'm alone and it's all mysterious and dark and I wonder what it's all about. What then? Those are the times I got to play my harmonica most. What'll I do?"

Jennie Rand. "I was pretty as a picture," Janet said of herself as a girl. There is no reason that we should doubt this. The now-faded photographs in her album of memories still conjure a sparkling-eyed little lady in the middy blouse so popular in the twenties. Thirty years ago would make Jennie about fifteen, pert, popular, possessed of a vivid imagination. We can readily imagine that Jennie got along very well with people. Mrs. Pike called her "a sweet girl," a general comment, to be sure, but indicative of some personality and charm. Jennie seemed to get along with both her father and mother, two very diverse characters, and was a product of their diversity. As we shall presently see, she inherited a kind of cautiousness from her mother, and a gay and charming imagination from her father. The conflict of these opposing qualities is made quite apparent.

It is her relations with Joey that are the most obvious and fully developed. Jennie loves Joey, tenderly, vocally: "I do love you—very much." When her mother derides Joey, Jennie comes strongly to his defense. She admits that she is the only one who sees anything in Joey, but her faith in him is unshaken. We get a distinct idea of the way she feels about him in these speeches:

JENNIE: You love me very much?

JOEY: Yes.

JENNIE: So much that you close your eyes and stamp your feet and clench your fists and your teeth and explode—(*Sighs.*) And you love me even more than that?

Even though Jennie is describing Joey's reaction, we feel that she is also describing her own. That the smooth front of the middy blouse is shaken by storms of real and violent emotion; that when they subside we see an inner composure and contentment of spirit peculiarly womanlike.

Jennie has her private dreams of the future, of that we may be sure. When faced with a problem, she often thinks it out by herself. Thus we see her deciding that she doesn't like Sam Wagschal at all. But one can never be sure. When both Sam and Joey ask her to the school picnic, she carries the problem to her parents. Mother

says Sam, father says Joey. Joey it is. But uncertainty creeps in after she has made her decision. The volatile temper which made her slap Sam when he laughed at Joey now rises quickly to the surface, and she suddenly bursts into tears with the conviction that Joey doesn't love her as much as he does his harmonica. Then as quickly as the emotion rises to the surface, it subsides, leaving in its wake a calm resolution to find out the truth.

Jennie is a creature of the most unbridled imagination. She looks upon the test which she has prepared for Joey as a "holy sacrifice," the ritual of which will result in a purgation of all doubts, resulting in a clean and pure love. In trying to formulate a suitable test, she considers such outlandish schemes as Joey's fighting a bull, or wrestling with an alligator. Perhaps an ordeal of going through fire or water, or "What about a duel—with Sam Wagschal?" No—her good sense comes to the rescue—"Sam's too strong."

One would not say that Jennie is a creature of temperament, but certainly she is capable of quickly changing her mind. She questions her own love for Joey, then decides it's true. She declares his love for her, then questions it. She is elated when Pa confirms her choice of Joey on the picnic; suddenly bursts into tears at the thought that Joey doesn't love her.

Jennie can be most emotional. Her hysteria at the end of the test sequence gives evidence of the depths of her emotion. She is stubborn when she wishes to be and is possessed of that kind of stubbornness which can be destroying. Though she is willing to arbitrate, there is a limit. Once having made up her mind that Joey is to take some kind of a test, she sticks to it. She is willing to reduce the time of Joey's abstinence from the harmonica, but she will not give up the project entirely. She is determined to go through with the test; if he does not cooperate, then she will never speak to him again as long as she lives.

"You take after me, daughter—You'd be unhappy with someone—uh—too down-to-earth." So said her father. He was right—she was.

Joseph Pike. At forty-five, Joseph Pike is a tired, bitter, and disillusioned man. When we meet him, we are given the bare facts of his present life so succinctly that they come almost as a shock.

Married, six children, lives in Denver, sells bathroom fixtures. Hates it—all of it. "I wish I was dead." Is there anything positive in Joseph's life? Only memories of yesterday; only dreams of what might have been. The foundations of his dreams, the bases of his memories—these are what we find out during the play. We find that Joseph Pike's life has been divided into two parts. As a child, Joey existed on dreams of the future. As a man, Joseph has existed on dreams of the past, of "New Haven, where I lived as a boy; Jennie Rand, whom I loved as a boy; and the boy."

Despite his dreams, Joseph Pike had not led a happy life as a boy; he was nagged at at home, belittled by the neighbors. His only solace was in his harmonica, his only happiness in Jennie. When Jennie imposed upon him the choice of choosing between the harmonica and herself, this warped young man was forced to divest himself of one of his two loves. He gave up the living, kept the inanimate. He became even more withdrawn into himself, lonely and embittered, left with a harmonica and half a dream. When he finished high school, he bummed his way out West. His dream, half gone, did not get him to Wyoming. In Denver, lonely, he met Anna on a blind date, got married, got a job selling bathroom fixtures, and begat six children; but he never forgot New Haven or Jennie Rand.

Joseph Pike is not a tragic hero. He is not a big enough person. But one cannot help feeling sorry for this man who has merely existed through the years, who has surrounded himself with the things that make most men happy—fair job, good wife, a home, children—and has withdrawn from them into a futile dream world.

The tragic irony of the play lies in Joseph Pike. We see now the man who, as a boy, declared vehemently that hardware would "kill his soul," engaged in self destruction by selling hardware. But even more, the concrete symbol of happiness, the harmonica, for which Joseph gave up his family and his girl, has gone by the way. The harmonica symbolized the creative self of Joseph, and the spark has died. For the creative spark of a person is nourished by the vital and the living, which Joseph left by the way. Why did he give it

up? "I don't know—stress and strain—stress and strain." Life was just too much for Joseph.

Janet Wagschal. There is a natural and expected parallel between Janet Wagschal and Joseph Pike. At forty-five, Janet is "bitter, stout, middle-aged." Janet has lived in "Fall River for thirty years, but still a stranger to it—and to my husband Sam that was." Why has she been a stranger to her environment all these years? Because, like Joseph, hers has been a life of dreams of the past. Her memories are particularly vivid. After the first past sequence when the narrator asks her how well she remembers it, the answer comes unhesitatingly, "Word for word."

The turning point in Janet's life came with her resolution to test Joey's love for her. Now she can see that it was a silly and childish thing to do and that it could never have really proved anything. But because of that she has been "all these years in Fall River, Mass., a lonely widow with a broken heart." The widow of two men—Sam Wagschal who was her husband, and Joey Pike, who was her love.

The years have not been good to Janet. We can readily imagine the barriers she created between herself and her husband; a barrier to keep out Sam's hustling and ambition, to keep in the memories of a slender boy with tousled hair and who played the harmonica. Janet's proclivity for living in the past must have been a double torture, for embodied in her memory was the half-formed shape of a feeling of guilt. Janet has admitted that the test was silly. She felt it then, she feels it now. But her pride has never let her admit that she was to blame for the broken lives which followed. Even at the end of the play, immediately preceding the recognition scene, Janet is unwilling to recognize her guilt. But as the veil lifts and she and Joseph become aware of each other's presence, the memories flood back and her feeling of guilt overwhelms her. Sobbing broken-heartedly she cries, "Where are you, dear darling boy? Forgive me, forgive me!" But time is running out says the narrator, "There's nothing can be done about it at this late date." And indeed, the time for fruitful recrimination has passed; the past takes its toll, the present is filled with a void.

Mrs. Rand. Looking back at Mrs. Rand from the vantage point

of thirty years, Janet's and Joseph's comments are as revealing as they are succinct. "Poor ma," "She was a frost-bitten one all right."

Mrs. Rand, though appearing in only one short scene, manages to be a real person whose feelings and ideas are very well motivated. She is outspoken, and it is through what she says, as well as the way she says it, that we learn most about her. Her lot is evidently not a happy one, for as Janet says of her father, he "kept losing job after job so he could stay at home and paint pictures." Mrs. Rand's reaction to this is quite vocal. "You know the aggravation Pa's caused me," she says. "Look what I've gone through. . . ."

It may very well be that Mr. Rand has also gone through a lot too, for Mrs. Rand is not the most tactful person in the world. Her ridicule of Joey might be expected, for Joey's is the antithesis of her manner of doing things. But Mrs. Rand is directly derogative of her daughter in questioning not only her choice but her taste. "I don't understand what you see in Joey. Why Joey?" To Jennie's reply that she thinks she loves him, Mrs. Rand acidly passes it off with "Pshaw! It's that silly childish music of his got you hypnotized."

When she describes Joey as a "shiftless good-for-nothing," she strikes pretty close to home, but somehow we resent her saying it. Joey, as we have seen, is not entirely blameless for causing this attitude in others, but in some respects Mrs. Rand is just as bad as Joey. Her nagging at Jennie for choosing Joey, her near-contemptuousness in dismissing him, her almost vicious diatribe against Mr. Rand—these show her to be a person with whom it would not be easy to live.

Given Mrs. Rand's necessary economies occasioned by her husband's flights into the aesthetic, her attitude toward Joey's proclivity along the same lines is quite understandable. When Joey was small, one could "make allowances (note—not "forgive," but "make allowances") for loafing around and "tootling that silly harmonica of his day and night, but now he's growing up you'd think he'd give up that nonsense—start amounting to something."

There is little doubt that Mr. Rand's habits have long been a sore spot with his wife. Her ambition for her daughter is that Jennie should not have to be burdened with similar responsibilities. "Look

what I've gone through—Joey's another Pa. Better go to the picnic with Sam." In the end, Jennie did—but not because her mother said so.

Mr. Rand. In the short transitional scene which leads into the glimpse of Jennie's home life, her father is introduced to us as a waiter—now and then—who kept losing job after job so that he could stay at home and paint pictures. Our interest is at once attracted. Is he lazy? Is he a true artist (though thwarted), or is he a "character"?

His wife prepares us by strongly indicating her feelings. Mr. Rand has exasperated and aggravated her no end by being unable to keep a job. "Loses every job he gets," she says to Jennie, "because his mind isn't on his work. Many's the time I never knew where our next meal was coming from." This is a real indictment of Mr. Rand, one that cannot lightly be passed off. The opportunity to work seems to have been available, but he lacked the moral stamina to combine necessary work with a hobby. Is he a dreamer, impractical, a visionary? "Some men drink, but he paints pictures. . . . I don't know but what I'd rather have a drinking man." This is strong language, even though there is a kind of lightening or relief in it, compared with Mrs. Rand's more acidulous comments. But we cannot help taking seriously her parting shot, "I'm warning you, child, take a leaf from me, look what I've gone through—Joey's another Pa. Better go to the picnic with Sam." It is at this point we meet the gentleman in question.

Jennie is obviously very fond of her father, and he of her. After her mother's advice about Joey, if Mr. Rand had been of the same opinion, or even lukewarm, it might have put a different complexion on things. But papa comes through nobly, "Of course, Joey! Why Sam? That nincompoop!" It is to be seen that Mr. Rand has opinions which are just as emphatic as those held by his wife, but that they take the opposite direction. What effect the continual differences of opinion have had on him is hinted at in his reply to Jennie's complaint of Sam Wagschal's being too conventional. "I know. You take after me, daughter—you'd be unhappy with someone—uh—too down-to-earth." Mr. Rand has been unhappily married for many years to

one of these down-to-earth persons—of that we may be sure. But what the effect has been on him is less easy to see. Certainly it affects his advice to Jennie.

Mr. Rand's most self-revealing speeches occur after Jennie tells him of Joey's emotional love. In Joey's sudden outbreaks of emotion in the middle of a song on the harmonica, Mr. Rand sees a possible parallel to his own feelings. "I feel the same way sometimes when I'm painting. . . . I'm not saying one way or the other, but as a fellow artist I can vouch for certain moments when you have to stand back, catch your breath and close your eyes—the beauty of your creation's too much for you." Forgetting for the moment the effect that these words have on Jennie, they are in themselves strongly indicative of Mr. Rand's approach to his art, and of his evaluation of himself as an artist. To him, his painting is the most important of things, transcending even family obligations. That he overestimated his ability, there is little doubt, else mention of it would certainly have been made in the present sequences. To him, however, it was important, and our job is not to judge him but to portray him.

Fathers can be notoriously ignorant of family crises, even when they occur right under their noses. Incidentally, it is in this process of "catching up" that the greater portion of the sparse humor of the play occurs—the "tingle" speech. In the latter half of the sequence, Mr. Rand tries a little too hard to understand his daughter, and his fumbling advice leads to her devising the test. One could say that, in all probability, this is typical of him. He is a little myopic mentally, and by the time he adjusts his perceptive spectacles, the need for them has passed the climax and is heading toward a stage of resolution. It is this quality of preoccupation in Mr. Rand which acts (ironically, for he is Jennie's more beloved parent) as the final motivation or trigger for the chain of events leading up to the climax of the play.

Mr. Pike. Either we meet Mr. Pike on one of his "baaad" days, or he must be presumed to be something less than a sympathetic character. The latter is the more probable.

To say that Mr. Pike does not appreciate his son's harmonica is an understatement, but the probability is that Mr. Pike is unhappier

about Joey's lack of ambition than he is about Joey's attachment to the instrument. To him the harmonica is as much a symbol of sloth and idleness as to his son Joey it is a symbol of freedom and strength. If this is an example of the home life of the Pikes, there was something lacking in domestic felicity in the Pike household.

Mr. Pike does not deliver himself of one kind word in the whole sequence. Granted that he has ample justification for his attitude toward Joey, and that this scene was selected for a particular purpose, we still have a feeling that we are seeing his typical character. Both at the beginning and end of the Pike sequence Joseph punctuates his father's personality. At the beginning, Joseph states that his father had never tried to get close to him. He was not a pal or companion to his son. At the end of the sequence Joseph tells the Narrator that his pa was too mean to him. If this scene is a true answer to the narrator's request for a "closer study of his relations with his father and stepmother . . . an intimate picture . . .," then we must conclude that the Pike household was not the happiest.

Mr. Pike ran a hardware store—a fascinating place to the uninitiated—perhaps even so to Mr. Pike. But daily associations with nuts and bolts and doorhinges and fertilizer are not generally conducive to an artistic outlook on life. Hardware is a good, honest business, one that any boy should be proud to work at. It is inconceivable to this stalwart of middle class life that any normal boy should disdain a ready-made position in society. But to add insult to injury, Joey makes a direct comment on his father by inferring that hardware is something beneath the dignity of man. This smouldering resentment between the two has broken out into open flame. Every word that Mr. Pike addresses to Joey is delivered in anger—from the bitterly sarcastic to the bitterly denunciatory. When Joey's stepmother attempts to intervene, he turns some of his wrath on her.

Mr. Pike was a nagger. "I've told him often enough that I can't stand that infernal racket!" "For the last time, Joey, are you going to do some work in the store or not—answer me! . . ." Evidently this is not the first time that these subjects have come up. Probably they

have intruded themselves with increasing frequency. Certainly Mr. Pike feels some resentment against his wife for her defense of Joey. "You've helped spoil him, Helen—humoring him..." Perhaps his wife has been guilty of overly assuaging the mental wounds Joey has suffered, but to Mr. Pike his wife's sin has been in *humoring* Joey. We would gather that Mr. Pike is one of the "Spare the rod and spoil the child" school.

That he is not entirely unaware of some of the more desirable aspects of life are evident when his wife suggests that Joey should go to college. He is not at all averse to the idea. But Joey is—immediately and vocally.

This refusal, together with Joey's averred intention of taking Jennie and his harmonica out West to ride horses and punch cows, reduces Mr. Pike to a state of apoplexy. The harmonica has to him become a symbol of waste and extravagance. To Mr. Pike that symbol, that thing, was to be abhorred—to be thrown in the sewer. He has gone too far to turn back, "Give it to me at once or get out of my house!" An ultimatum; and like all ultimatums, like any attempt to reduce a situation to just two extremes, this one fails. He loses, the problem is still there, and we hear the banging of the door as he leaves. "I don't even hate Pa," says Joey.

Mrs. Pike.

NARR.: Did she abuse you, Joseph—your stepmother?

JOSEPH: Oh, no—on the contrary—she meant awfully well—tried to get close to me—

We can readily imagine what Helen Pike's thoughts were when she married a widower and assumed the responsibility of bringing up his son. It would be no easy job to make for herself a place in Ezra's or Joey's hearts. She felt that she must make an extraordinary effort, but she tried too hard, and failed.

Mrs. Pike's sympathies lie with her stepson. When her husband berates Joey, she comes to Joey's defense. Having married into a family of two men who were diametrically opposed to each other, she faced the dilemma of acting as a balance between the two. That she favors Joey over his father could be due to a number of things

which are not mentioned; but in her short scene alone with Joey it seems quite evident that the mother's instinct in her has overcome that of the wife.

Mrs. Pike can be strong willed, but she can also be gentle and tender. She is essentially a fair person, resenting the fact that her husband seems to take undue advantage of Joey by virtue of his dominant position. So strongly does she side with Joey that she threatens to leave the house if Mr. Pike doesn't calm down. She has evidently shielded Joey from his father's wrath on other occasions. "You've helped spoil him, Helen—humoring him..." Her actions have not been unaccompanied by plans for the future. Joey is to go to college. In her eyes, he is not an immature and drifting youth. To her, Joey is possessed of definite artistic potentialities which should be encouraged.

There are limits, however, even to virtue, but Mrs. Pike never found that out; for thirty years later her stepson says of her, she "was too good to me."

Narrator. The Narrator is difficult to describe. The difficulty of description lies partially in the fact that he is not the kind of narrator who merely lays the scenes, gives exposition, creates the mood, or compresses the story line. He is a device, to be sure, but such a personal kind of device that he becomes an integral part of the present sequences.

We have the persistent feeling that he is possessed of celestial vision, yet he is humanly probing. He knows the answers, yet is careful to ask the questions, and when getting the answer he knows to be true, seems to be very mildly surprised. He is curious, in a gentle and sympathetic way, verifying the truths, gently probing until they are out; acting as friend, regretful that he cannot act as counsel.

The Narrator is godlike, but he is not a god. He is impersonal but has feelings. He is sympathetic without being sentimental; probing, without being curious; gentle, but firm. He is a symbol with a substance, personifying the inevitability of eventually being compelled to add up the column and come face to face with the sum total of our existence.

SCENE AND LINE ANALYSIS

FOLLOWING is an example of analyzing scenes and lines. For this illustration, we shall take the opening scene in *The Test*. At the left side are the explanations of the meaning behind the line, the implication of the line, and occasional directions as to its interpretation. It is this kind of conscientious analysis which will soon produce in the student the faculty of that immediate insight into scene, line, plot, and character which is so important to the radio actor.

1. The Narrator must be established as warm, but curiously impersonal.
2. This first speech of Joseph Pike is most important in establishing his present character. His tired and embittered tone is further emphasized by the repetition of the statistics. He projects the repeat a little more to fix emphasis.
4. This is to be later brought out in Joey's dislike for hardware; so must be got across.
- 5-6. Punctuate Joseph's general bitterness.
8. And this is the reason behind Joseph's present bitterness. He softens a bit as his mind reverts to his dreams.
9. Must get "thirty years" across. This reference sets the time between the present and past episodes.
10. In the world of dreams, time is no factor.
11. In this first reference to Janet, we must get idea of the Narrator turning to her to emphasize the space between Janet and Joseph.
- 12-14. We must be sure that the names get across, so that there will be some foreshadowing when related to the reference to Sam Wagschal in the second scene.
16. A capsule history of Janet—parallels Joseph's in 2.

SCENE 1. This is the introductory scene, which is designed to set the play in a certain frame, lay the unreality of the situation, introduce the characters, set the time of the play, mood of the play, and give the background of the story. Inasmuch as this is the opener, clarity is very important.

1. NARR.: What is your name, sir?
2. JOSEPH: (*Beaten.*) My name is Joseph Pike. I am 45, married, six children, and live in Denver, Colorado, with my wife Anna. I hate being 45, married, six children, and living in Denver, Colorado with my wife Anna.
3. NARR.: What is your occupation?
4. JOSEPH: Salesman—bathroom fixtures.
5. NARR.: And you hate that, too?
6. JOSEPH: I hate that, too.
7. NARR.: And what do you love?
8. JOSEPH: I love New Haven, where I lived as a boy, Jennie Rand, whom I loved as a boy. And the boy.
9. NARR.: That was thirty years ago?
10. JOSEPH: That was yesterday. (*Sighs.*) I wish I was dead!
11. NARR.: All right, Joseph, that's all for the time being. And now you, Madame—a synopsis of yourself, please?
12. JANET: I am Mrs. Janet Wagschal.
13. NARR.: Formerly Jennie Rand?
14. JANET: Formerly Jennie Rand.
15. NARR.: Go ahead, please.
16. JANET: Now a childless widow—bitter, stout, middle-aged, Fall River Mass thirty years, but still a stranger to it—and to my husband Sam that was. New Haven's my home.

17. A very pointed comment which gives us an idea of Janet's appearance and demeanor. But a gentle comment—and softly quizzical, not skeptical.

19. Set your dream now, Janet.

- 19a. Parallel with Joseph's line above (10).

- 22–25. In these speeches, the tone of the scene must gradually soften, changing from the harshness of the preceding introduction. The mood of the opening Joey-Janet scene, which follows immediately, is soft and childishly romantic. And this scene must lead into it. Janet's last line describes the mood of Jennie and Joey as we see them at the beginning of the following scene.

IN SUMMARY

IN EACH INSTANCE a thumbnail introduction of the character or characters is given before they appear. These serve graphically to place the character in the context of his surroundings and to give the listener a better understanding of the role each character plays.

There is a high degree of selectivity in presenting the facets of the characters in *The Test*. This selectivity of character traits, plus their placement in the most important expositional sequences, makes for skillfully drawn, logically complete characterizations.

None of the characters is truly tragic. Though elements of a serious nature are consistently uppermost, the characters are reflections of these elements, not primary generating forces.

Each of the characters in *The Test* is in strong conflict with his present environment, with the possible exception of Jennie. These conflicts exert important influences in shaping the patterns of action. Thus the feeling Mrs. Rand has toward Joey, whom she com-

17. NARR.: You were really young once?
18. MUSIC: *Fade in a harmonica, playing "The Missouri Waltz," down and continuing.*
19. JANET: *(In a hushed, tremulous voice.)* His name was Joey. He played the harmonica. Joey Pike. And he never combed his hair. I've never loved anyone else—least of all Sam.
- 19a. *(In a tragic whisper.)* Sometimes I wish I was dead!
20. NARR.: And you've never seen him since?
21. JANET: Never.
22. NARR.: And you really laughed once? And did your eyes flash and your teeth glisten?
23. JANET: I was pretty as a picture. He played "The Missouri Waltz." He always kept playing it.
24. NARR.: On his harmonica?
25. JANET: Yes. I was so happy then. His soul was full of music. And my heart was full of joy.

pares to Mr. Rand, parallels the feelings Mr. Pike has toward Joey in his placing of the material above the spiritual, etc.

The strong elements of irony in the play are made quite clear. Joey breaks with Jennie over the issue of his harmonica—a lifeless thing which he later discards. Joey breaks with his home environment because of his antipathy toward hardware—and ends up as a hardware salesman. Mr. Rand, who loves his daughter, blights her life in a well-meant but clumsy attempt to assuage her intuitive fears concerning her choice of a man.

The element of pride is strongly emphasized; both Jennie and Joey were prideful and stubborn people. This fatal pride in each of them contributed strongly to their later unhappiness.

There is a real question as to whether Joey and Jennie would have ever been able to "make a go of it" if they had not become separated. We have called attention to the immaturity manifested

in each, both as youngsters and as adults. In addition the many characteristics of Jennie which make her more "regular" than Joey should not be underemphasized; for instance, her several attempts to make him vocalize his love.

It may seem that too much significance has been attached to the negative aspects of character, such as the immaturity of Joseph and Jennie. This was deemed necessary in order to make more vivid the serious elements of the play which the author wanted to bring out. But again, let me stress finally that though it is important to recognize these elements, overly emphasizing them will rob the play of much that is human and appealing.

SECTION THREE

SPECIAL PROBLEMS
AND TECHNIQUES
IN RADIO ACTING
AND PRODUCTION

Characterization and perspective

WE EMBARK on one of the most exciting problems in drama, that of making flesh and blood out of descriptive words and speeches. There is no magic formula for obtaining the proper characterization, and the creation and communication of a character in radio pose some very definite problems. The actor's approach is twofold: first to understand and be able to use those universal principles of acting which are common to all media, then to adapt these to the particular medium of radio.

Characterization and acting are terms which are often used synonymously. We need, however, to differentiate between the process of discovering the character and that of the over-all process underlying play and character analysis and the actual communication of those discoveries to the audience. In the present book, therefore, we will use acting as a broad term, denoting the whole process of the actor's art—from the reading and study of plays and performances (for general background) to the performance of a specific role in a specific play. Characterization is referred to as the actor's understanding, development, and projection of a specific role.

Assuming that you have a role in a dramatic radio show and have been given the script in advance, these are the logical steps for you to follow: ¹

¹ The first portions of this chapter are based upon the common non-commercial practice of distributing scripts to the actors several days in advance of performance. This practice is less often used in commercial work. See pp. 176-178.

STUDY OF THE PLAY

READ THE PLAY over, carefully, yet casually. Now, what are your reactions after the first reading? Do any particular characters stand out? What was the theme of the story? How does the action progress? Were you excited near the climax? Which scenes and details were particularly vivid? Jot down your first impressions; then compare them with the more nearly true answers you will be able to give after some study of the play.

When you have read the play through and recorded your initial impressions, the next step is to read and study the play thoroughly. Analyze it according to the method previously presented. The experienced actor will instinctively analyze the play, but the beginner should make a conscious effort to note his reactions.

Your study of the play as a whole leaves you with an impression which will serve as a guide for your future study of the character. For instance, consider *The Ghost of Benjamin Sweet*,² by Frederick and Pauline Gilsdorf. This is a half-hour, contemporary, satiric farce, domestic in content and realistic in style. It is definitely fantasy, but so believable! There are two major sequences, the first made up of the first graveyard scene between Sweet and Dismal, Tubbs and Mrs. Tubbs at home, and Sweet's attempts to frighten

² *The Ghost of Benjamin Sweet* is a radio classic. For the benefit of those who do not have a copy presently available, here is a brief summary of the plot. Benjamin Sweet, Ghost, is looked on with disfavor by his brother ghosts because of his distaste for scaring human beings. On this Halloween night the Powers-That-Be have delegated Dismal Ghost to give Benjamin his final warning—either scare the pants off Theobald Tubbs (who has a reputation for not being afraid of anything) or face the alternative of being turned into a skeleton and stuffed into somebody's cupboard. Faced with this horrible threat, Sweet goes to Tubbs's home, but, instead of scaring him, makes friends with him. Seeing in Tubbs's dynamic personality a possible champion for himself, Sweet shoots Tubbs, thus making Tubbs a ghost also. This does not destroy their beautiful friendship. They spend the rest of the night roistering, tippling, and breaking up parties. In the cold gray dawn, the Board of Management comes to try Sweet and sentence him for disobedience. But Tubbs finds a loophole in the law, and as the sun comes up, the ghosts disperse hastily shouting invective at Tubbs, but he and Sweet, now an invincible team, loudly promise that some changes are going to be made. The complete play may be found in Lass, McGill, and Axelrod, *Plays from Radio*, Douglas Coulter, *Columbia Workshop Plays*, and Ansorge, Lucas, McCoy, and Tower, *Prose and Poetry for Enjoyment*.

Mr. Tubbs ending with Tubbs's "timely" demise. The second major sequence is made up of four minor sequences: Sweet and Tubbs as brother ghosts-in-arms; the unexpected affair at Mrs. High-treble's party; the graveyard scene between Sweet, Tubbs, and Dismal; and the inquisition of Sweet by the ghostly Board of Governors. Development is by plot, and the action of the play takes place on Halloween night. Plot and characters share top billing in this unit play in series (it was a "Columbia Workshop" presentation). It is definitely to entertain, and intended for a general audience. The satiric elements would probably appeal to an audience that is a little more educated and selective; the elements of farce—situation, drunken horseplay, etc., appeal to most listeners. This show is a commentary (not too thinly veiled) on the false stuffiness of upper middle class attempts at dominance of their lesser fellow men. It should be played very lightly, but with an undertone, not of seriousness, but sympathetic understanding of the little man. "Even ghosts have feelings!"

RELATION OF CHARACTER TO PLAY

HAVING THOROUGHLY STUDIED the play as a whole, the actor is now ready to start looking at the play from the point of view of his contribution—that of a character in the play. Some general questions are in order:

Is he (your character) on the side of the protagonist or the antagonist?

What is his reason for being? (advance plot, advance action, exposition, background, local color, atmosphere, mood). Where does the character fit into the play, and what are his contributions?

What is his relationship to the conflict? To the pattern of action?

What does the character want in the whole play? In each scene?

What are the immediate causes which evoke action by the character?

What are the character's relationships to the world outside the play?

What are his relationships to the other characters? Theirs to him?

The actor, in studying his role, will again include the "why" in answering the above questions. He will, if he is relatively inexperienced, go into some details which would be unnecessary were he a professional.

Let us suppose that you have been given the part of Dismal Ghost in the above mentioned play. In order to help clarify your role in your own mind, here is how you might answer the preceding questions:

Dismal is really a character out of this world—figuratively as well as literally. As a self-appointed hatchet-man for the Board of Governors of the ghostly world, Dismal takes great delight in needling his fellow ghosts into complying with their ghostly duties of haunting. He issues dire warnings of impending doom to Benjamin Sweet if Sweet doesn't make his quota of chain rattlings. We meet Dismal in the first scene of the play, and in the next to the last scene. His character is remarkably consistent in both scenes.

Dismal is definitely on the side of the antagonist. The Board of Governors (which comes in at the very last) is implicitly the antagonist; but as its representative, and because of the fact that we meet Dismal twice before we meet them, Dismal assumes limited stature as the personification of the antagonist. We realize that Benjamin is really fighting the system as personified by the Chairman of the Board and Dismal.

The primary reason for Dismal is to provide exposition and advance the action. He also makes a definite contribution in helping to set a definite mood. In the first scene he accosts Sweet, tells him of the plans to lock him up in a cupboard if he doesn't behave more like a ghost should, and needles him into trying to scare Theobald Tubbs, who, complains Sweet, "is the worst old fogey in this country. Nothing in the earth, the air, or the water can scare him. It's been tried before by experts." But Dismal counters with the Board's attitude, "They don't like your attitude. You aren't making your quota this year. They say you don't haunt worth a nickel anymore." In the last scene, Dismal serves to warn of the inquisition, and motivate the entrance of the Powers-That-Be.

The conflict is between Sweet and the System. Sweet, the ami-

able, live-and-let-live character, versus the System, you must do this-that—do it now! Dismal is the representative of the Board, the personification of the System: he serves to prod Benjamin into action in the opening scene, and to heighten the action in the next-to-last one. In each of the scenes Dismal is heralded by a “swoosh” of wind, and his first words are “Brother(s), get to work!” This line symbolizes Dismal, for his main purpose in life seems to be that of the busybody who is concerned about everyone but himself. Dismal’s world is one of ectoplasm surrounded by humans on all sides. He loves ghosts, organization, and orderliness, and dislikes humans, disorganization, and imbroglio.

Dismal is the representative of the Powers-That-Be (the Board), and as such strongly disapproves of Benjamin Sweet’s lackadaisical approach to the most important business in the world—that of trying to scare human beings out of their skins.

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS TO THE STUDY OF THE ROLE

CHARACTERIZATION is a threefold operation: the mental process of seeking the character, the creative process of bringing the character to life, and the communicative process of projecting it to the audience. The mental process must be undertaken first of all, for failure to search conscientiously for the character often results in a stereotype.

In formulating his character the actor may approach the study either objectively or subjectively, or he may use both methods in combination. The person using the subjective approach would take all the known quantities of character and weigh them intuitively. The person using the objective approach would tend to weigh them impartially and without prejudice. To make a generalization, the actor who attempts the purely subjective approach may achieve spirit and emotion, and yet leave the listener undecided as to the character’s true ideas and feelings. The actor who is, on the other hand, thoroughly objective in his approach may conceive the true character but seem stiff and awkward in his presentation.

In radio acting especially, it is necessary to make the character

clear to the audience, but it is equally important that the audience be held emotionally. The best approach undoubtedly lies in a combination of the two methods described above. The actor must pay attention to his artistic impulse if he is to be true to his art. He must also pay attention to his intellect if he is to be true to his craft.

Mention has been made of static and dynamic characters. As you develop your role, it is best to have in mind the meanings of these terms. A static character is one which does not change (or changes very little) during the course of the play. He remains true to the same ideals, and has the same, or very similar, ideas and convictions at the end of the play as he had at the beginning. The dynamic character, on the other hand, moves with the action. During the course of the play, he undergoes changes in attitudes, ideas, feelings, emotions. The minor characters of the play (all else being equal) are the more likely to be static. In a radio play especially, they must be quickly established. The more important characters are more likely to be dynamic characters. However, this is only a general observation. It is not always true.

THE CHARACTER HIMSELF

THE CHARACTER you are searching for is not one person, but two. He is representative of a certain group, but he is also an individual. First you must determine general characteristics and then make them individual. The reason for this is that there are certain things to which the audience is accustomed—conventions of character—to adopt a phrase. You must ask yourself: "What qualities make this character similar to other people of the same general type, and what qualities distinguish him, or make him unique?" You are searching, therefore, for both a general and a specific character. In seeking the former, Dean has this to say:

... Certain traits are characteristic of extreme old age and of middle age, and others are out of the norm in regard to physical carriage and voice. Certain ones are also characteristic of nationalities such as the Italian, Scotch, Irish, French, Indian, and Negro. All of these have physical and vocal mannerisms that are outside the possible visualization (or normal response) of anybody who has not been

closely associated with these types or observed them closely. The actor who is to play such a character part must find a similar person in real life and carefully watch his physical and vocal actions.³

The radio actor should follow Professor Dean's advice before he receives a role, for this observation must be represented in the actor's well of knowledge and understanding, available on a few hours' notice. An actor, no matter how good he may be, cannot create a character without a base for his imagination.

The actor must, therefore, build a basic character which will be universally recognized, then clothe him with the clothes of the individual character he is playing. The character should be a definite individual, but he must also be recognized and understood. Communication is as vital as creation.

WHAT WE WANT TO FIND OUT ABOUT THE CHARACTER

THE BETTER ACQUAINTED you become with your character the more natural you are going to feel when you step into his shoes. The following list may be helpful.

1. Age, sex, appearance
2. Socio-economic group
3. Education
4. Evident likes and dislikes
5. General environment
 - a. Period
 - b. Place
 - c. Mores and customs
6. Specific environment
 - a. Church
 - b. Home
 - c. Place in community
 - d. Employment
 - e. Family
 - f. Hobbies, etc.

³ Alexander Dean, *Fundamentals of Play Directing* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1941), p. 117.

7. Hereditary factors
8. Physical actions and reactions
9. Mental actions and reactions
 - a. Complexes
 - b. Temperament
 - c. Attitude toward life
 - d. Inherent qualities (gracious, tender-hearted, etc.)

These questions are general ones; yet they tend to get specific answers. And it is from these specific answers that we are able to *select* the traits which will make the character come to life. There are other questions that could be asked. Each actor will make for himself the list which works best for him. These will, however, give you a good basis for building your list.

HOW DO WE FIND OUT ABOUT THE CHARACTER?

WE HAVE ASKED a lot of questions. There are many details, important details, which we must know about the character in order to make him individual. These are the places we look for clues and hints:

1. The author's description of the character
2. The author's line directions
3. The author's line interpretations
4. The lines of the character himself
5. The lines of other characters
6. The relationships—mental, physical, and emotional—between this character and the other characters in the play
7. Exposition
8. Historical and social research
9. Observation and remembrance

Often it may be impossible or unnecessary to employ all of these sources to obtain the character. Let us take our old friend Dismal Ghost to illustrate the use of the above points:

1. The author's description of the character:
"A very sour individual."

2. The author's line directions:

A gust of wind and the clank of chains ushers Dismal in on each appearance.

3. The author's line interpretations:

When Dismal is lecturing to Sweet on the error of his ways, we have such interpretations as "solemnly," "severely," "direly," "sharply." When Dismal is referring to the privileges and pleasures of the ghostly prerogatives, his attitude is "approvingly," "enthusiastically."

4. The lines of the character himself:

Referring to the owl hooting in the lonely cemetery, Dismal says approvingly, "That's a very fine sounding owl." And when he succeeds in scaring a human, he cries enthusiastically, "Did you see him take to his heels?" But when admonishing Sweet, he asks solemnly, "Brother, do you want a word of warning?" "No!" says Sweet. "I'll give it to you anyway." So typical of some of the more dominant busybodies who are not yet ectoplasm! Many other lines give hints of his character. These are but examples.

5. The lines of the other characters:

How Sweet classes his fellow ghost is bitterly shown: "Any minute they'll be after me—the whole bony, chain-rattling crew of them." To Dismal's offer of companionship, Sweet is emphatic: "Not you, . . . sourface." Tubbs speaks of him as a "melancholy cuss . . .," and makes his position doubly clear with "Say, how about you scuttling along? We don't like your company."

6. The relationships—mental, physical, and emotional—between this character and the other characters in the play:

Dismal is evidently very close in all three respects to the ghostly crew which dominates the spirit world. He is sent to warn Sweet: "Well, all I know is they've got their eyes on you at headquarters . . . and I was sent to warn you. They don't like your attitude . . ." His reaction to Sweet has been indicated, and to Tubbs he is scarcely less cordial: "Silence, brother Tubbs."

7. Exposition:

There is little in the exposition of the play to indicate Dismal's personal character; but he is the personal representative of the Board of Management, and the expository material concerning the latter is applicable. Dismal is feared because Headquarters can exert such power over the ghosts. The errands they prescribe are termed "silly" by Sweet. His concept of them is a "bony, chain-rattling crew" always after a person with "Brother, get to work! Moan and groan and rattle your chains." "It's a thankless job," says Sweet to Tubbs. "It wouldn't be bad . . . being a ghost . . . if they didn't check up on you so close. . . . You've got to follow orders. . . . Why they won't even let you sit down and rest a minute. Soon as you do, somebody's around."

8. Historical and social research, and

9. Observation and remembrance:

Most of the actors in this play, as well as the great majority of the listening audience, have had very little experience with real, live [sic!] ghosts. Seriously, there is a goodly proportion of satire in this play which raises it above the low comedy that seems to be paramount on first, non-critical reading. The actor should recognize the parallels between the society of ghosts and the society of humans. As for observation, the parallel structure of the two societies is such that the ghostly Dismal has many counterparts who, still on this earth, are available as prototypes.

On the basis of our preliminary work, we are now able to put down some general ideas concerning the character. To continue with Dismal (remembering the parallel between the two societies):

1. Age, sex, appearance:

Middle-aged man. Sallow, cadaverous, pointed nose, thin, tall.

2. Socio-economic group:

Lower middle social and economic group.

3. Education:

Average.

4. Evident likes and dislikes:

He likes order and regimentation, dislikes a live-and-let-live attitude.

5. General environment:

In the contemporary ghostly society, Dismal finds a niche for himself similar to that which he enjoyed as a human. His officiousness, combined with a somewhat sly personality, make him the perfect representative for the Board of Governors.

6. Specific environment:

He enjoys standing, of a sort, in the ghostly community. We have a feeling that he is an "apple-polisher" to his superiors, but toward his duties as a representative, he is very happily conscientious. As for hobbies and amusements—perish forbid! Business—the business of keeping the brother ghosts busy moaning and groaning and rattling their chains—what more could "life" offer? We have some idea of his relative importance, for when the ghostly crew comes in en masse at the end, Dismal is so relegated to the background, that he does not utter a single word in the last scene.

7. Hereditary factors:

No hereditary factors available. None necessary to play the part.

8. Physical actions and reactions:

Ordinarily it might be taken for granted that most ghosts slithered, rather than walked. The ghosts in this play are seemingly endowed with the attributes of both ghosts and men. We expect Dismal to be a bit sly in his movements. Big and deep set eyes look into yours as he shakes your hand. His palms are moist, and he holds your hand a little too long. He insinuates himself in where he is not wanted. His movements are slow, but not stolid. As he sits on the spiked fence, we have the idea that he would meticulously test the points for comfort.

9. Mental actions and reactions:

Dismal has a rather gloomy outlook on "life." He is not a sorrowful person—he is just overly pessimistic. That he can

enjoy certain things is shown in his appreciation of "that fine sounding owl." When he and Sweet scare the daylights out of a human, Dismal rubs his hands in glee. He receives very little pleasure out of anything except work. When the work goes wrong, he is extremely unhappy. His attitude is that anything which might contribute a little to a person's happiness is verboten. He goes even further by classifying happiness as a mortal sin. He fancies himself slow to anger, but with his mind closed to any except his own side of a question, the statements of the opposition fall on such deaf ears that there is little danger of disagreement. Dismal is very sincere in his approach. He really believes that what he is doing is the right thing, and no matter how much one may disagree, one can not question his sincerity.

ON FILLING OUT THE CHARACTER

ANY DRAMATIC CHARACTER is in written form merely a skeleton. It is, allegorically, a one-dimensional character until it is given breath by the director and life by the actor. Granted, of course, that many written characterizations are exceptionally superior, the majority of them are not—especially in radio plays. It is no secret that most radio writers can not spend the time on a script which is necessary if it is to be polished. This is no condemnation; it is merely a statement of the facts.

In any play the details of character are necessarily sketchy, and the actor must fill out the character if he is to make him complete and believable. Those details which are not explicitly given or directly implied in any of the sources given above must be filled in by the actor. How? By association of character when possible, by invention when necessary, and by intuition always.

The preceding quotation from Dean on general characterizations highlights the method of character associations. One of the frequently used methods of filling out the character is to make use of those easily recognized general attributes.

Invention of characteristics should not be pulled out of thin air. They should be integrated with the other aspects of character and

should not deny or compromise a major facet of the character. Invention usually lies in the creation of minor characteristics which add naturalness to the character and make him more believable. Invention, properly used, adds specificity to the character, and motivation to the actor. Intuition is the term often used in describing this third method of filling out the character. If you prefer the use of "feeling for the role," "instinctive approach," or like label, by all means use it, for each means the same thing. By intuition I mean that knack of being able to grasp instinctively the fine points of the role.

Some fine points of character are desirable, but too many little things are not desirable. The listener will fill them in for you. The point is graphically illustrated, though perhaps not from a dramatic standpoint, in this explanation by Maurice Mitchell:

... Let's say I was a builder and I ran a picture of a beautiful Cape Cod cottage in a printed advertisement and my caption read, as you have seen them read many times, "Here's *Your* Dream House." Maybe *your* dream house isn't a Cape Cod cottage—maybe it's a functional, modern house, maybe it's something very different from a Cape Cod cottage—so I've wasted most of the money I've spent on that illustration. But if I say to you, "Just picture your dream home," you can actually picture it. You're sitting on its front porch, with your slippers on, of a Sunday, having a drink and listening to the ballgame; it's on the very lot you want it to be on, and it's built the way you want it to be built. You have formed a picture in your mind nobody could ever paint or televise or print. That's what we mean by the pictures that radio paints in people's minds.⁴

Mr. Mitchell did not perhaps lay enough stress on guiding the listener into the path desired. It may be (though I doubt it) that every person has planned in his mind the kind of little house he would like to own. When, however, the radio actor is establishing a characterization, he must skillfully insert just the right number of pointers to the character to enable the listener to finish the job to his (the listener's) satisfaction.

⁴ Maurice B. Mitchell, then Director of Broadcast Advertising, National Association of Broadcasters, in a speech before the Jamestown Advertising and Sales Club, Jamestown, New York, January 19, 1949.

PROGRESSION OF CHARACTER—ADDITION

We start out with the character, Mr. A. Mr. A becomes involved in a conflict; he is affected by the actions of other characters and events; his attitude toward certain things is altered. In other words, he changes in some way or ways during the play just as people change in real life from day to day.

Now, the mistake a great many inexperienced actors make is to take the complete character and use that character for the starting character. Mr. A (if he is dynamic) is *not* the same person at the end which he was at the beginning of the play. Let us illustrate.

Beginning of Play	Mr. A
Act. I: loses job and is forced to kowtow to father-in-law for new start	Mr. A + 2
Act II: his daughter is discovered to be "in trouble"	Mr. A + 4
Act III: daughter kills herself, weak spouse blames him; other incidents to make him believe that the world holds nothing for him. He resolves to commit suicide	Mr. A + 6

The Mr. A + 6 at the end of the play is *not* the Mr. A at the beginning of the play. If the actor uses Mr. A + 6 as his starting character, he will be defeating the author's purpose and may in all probability be out of harmony with the rhythm of the other characters and the play itself. The starting character must be capable of becoming the end character—but he is *not* the end character at the beginning of the play.

PROGRESSION OF CHARACTER—SUBTRACTION

IT FOLLOWS THAT if character progression is a process of addition, then in order to have a basis for the beginning character, one must subtract from the complete character to formulate the starting character. The statement above is the key to the problem: *The starting character must be capable of becoming the end character.*

We have previously learned that by far the most important

methods of discovering the character lie in the play itself, and the problem is one of discovery and hindsight—camouflaged as foresight. The Mr. A of the previous illustration must contain, inherently, those qualities of weakness (or strength, depending on point of view) which are necessary to his becoming Mr. A + 6. These qualities must be logical qualities, and their development must be logical. “A role must have continuous and unbroken line,” says Stanislavski, and the continuity of role is certainly dependent on the logic of character revelation.

MOTIVATION

MOTIVATION is the “why” of the character’s actions and reactions. The radio actor must realize the reason why his character does as he does, for only then can he make the character convincing to the audience.

Motivations in radio drama should be made exceptionally clear, for there is nothing which will cause the listener to switch programs so quickly as a dramatic presentation which he cannot follow. If the author fails to motivate the character properly, then the actor must himself search for the motivation. Any important action or reaction must be motivated, and if invention is necessary, so be it. When the proper motivation is found, write it down. It is not necessary or desirable in dramatic radio work to trust the memory too much. Pencils are cheap.

VISUALIZING THE CHARACTER

THE PROCESS OF creating the character mentally and emotionally has now been more or less completed. The polishing of the characterization will come in rehearsal. With these attributes firmly established, the radio actor must turn to visualizing the physical attributes of his character. While it is true that the radio listener will supply the details of appearance, the actor must know the physical details of his character in order to portray him. Physical details are important, even on the radio. A radio actor portraying Napoleon would certainly take into consideration the stature of the person he is portraying. Why should he not apply this principle to

any other well-defined character? How tall is he? Weight? Complexion? Features? How does he walk, shake hands? How does he sit, stand? Any deformities? These are but a few of the physical details which the actor must know.

PRE-REHEARSAL WORK

WE HAVE, in this chapter, been discussing characterization from the point of view of the student or non-professional group. Quite obviously, in a learning situation, it is impossible to expect the average student to come up with a polished performance four or five hours after he has been handed a script. It is common practice, therefore, to give the actor his script several days in advance of performance, and hold one or two rehearsal sessions in advance of the day of performance. This works to the advantage both of the show and the participants. It insures a better and smoother show, and it gives the persons involved an opportunity to learn as they work. The director has the time and opportunity to discuss roles and shape characterization to fit the whole of the play.

In most professional situations, however, the director's time is exceedingly limited, as is the budget. Preliminary rehearsals would mean that actors must be paid extra. Scripts are often not received in final duplicate form until a day or two before the show, sometimes even less. Rehearsal time is sharply restricted. If the director has to spend a half-hour out of the four trying to correct the mistakes in character made by a couple of his actors, the whole show will suffer. For these reasons, therefore, many commercial directors prefer that the actor not see the script before the first table rehearsal on the day of the show. As he distributes the script, he can give directions on characterization, and with a few well-chosen words guide his actors into acceptable characterizations. For he is working with trained and finished radio actors, experienced in the process of quick assimilation of script and creation of character.

The question of whether or not the radio actor should be given a script in advance is a rather touchy one. From a director's point of view, the professional radio actor is highly skilled in turning out what passes for a polished performance after only one or two read-

ings. His performance will be believable, if not distinguished. He may or may not have the background or incentive to work on the script even were it given to him in advance. He may find certain faults or make mental reservations about the character or the script which the director would have to resolve or change during valuable rehearsal time.

The conscientious actor, on the other hand, may well ask just how even the best of players can be expected to do a consistently good job if he is required to turn on the creative process as he would the water faucet.

This argument can not be resolved here. Each side has its own merit. Perhaps it should be pointed out, however, that the quality of radio drama, as broadcast, will certainly not get any better so long as the prevalent commercial practice is continued. It seems probable that the directors on the right track are those who make every effort to secure the services of actors who are willing to spend some time and effort on their role in advance, and who are capable of using the script to advantage. It is encouraging to note that one seems to hear of such far-sighted directors a little more often now than formerly.

The capable radio actor, given a script in advance, can undertake and complete many of the creative aspects of his role before the rehearsal period. If the play is an adaptation, he can have become familiar with the original work so as to be able to interpret it properly. In either an adaptation or original, he can analyze the play and his role. There is one thing that he must be careful, however, not to do: allow his concept of character to become so set that it cannot be easily shaped or molded by the director at the beginning of the rehearsal. The actor attempts, therefore, to develop a strong but flexible characterization—flexible enough to allow for necessary change or integration.

The student who is working toward a career in professional radio must be prepared to accede to a director's wishes in the matter of advance preparation. If the director does not distribute scripts in advance, the actor must be prepared to "give on the spot." The best training for this seems to be experience. You must become

familiar with all types and kinds of plays and characters. This process of learning and familiarization never stops, of course, but the early training in analysis and interpretation is most important. In time you will find that when you read over a script for the first time, the parts seem to fall into place: you are able to see just how you can make your character a real person, just how he fits in with the other persons in the play, and how he can be presented most effectively. This becomes, as we have said before, an instinctive process. But it is instinct based upon and resulting from hundreds of hours of conscious effort.

THIS MODERN AUDIENCE

AUDIENCE TASTE, appreciation, and understanding are constantly changing. Some scholars have even gone so far as to describe the history of the dramatic arts as the history of the change in audience tastes. This changing taste may be quite readily proved by viewing an average motion picture filmed only ten or fifteen years ago.

It is sometimes difficult to adapt a character which was designed for a previous specialized audience to a general audience of the present day. Language which is particularly stilted may call attention to itself, thus destroying much of the effect. Adapters who are particularly anxious to preserve as much as possible of the original flavor of the work are inclined to over-season the adaptation. The flavor of a period piece is accented by a dash of the original, much as the flavor of a special dish is enhanced by a dash of a particular herb. Too much seasoning—wrong flavor.

ACTING

Acting is an art and a science.

Acting is creation plus communication.

Acting is concept and technique.

IT IS NOT the function of this book or of any of its sections to go deeply into the theory of acting, for it is presumed that the radio actor, professional or would-be, has had some previous work in the fundamentals of acting. Let us review some of those fundamentals in the light of radio.

The above statements, though not synonymous, are closely related. For the actor faces two distinct but not separate jobs. He must first create the character and integrate his character with the others in the play; then he must intelligibly present this character to the audience.

A great deal has been written about the relative importance of technique in putting across the character to the audience. Generally speaking, there are three schools of thought on the subject. The first maintains that the actor who adequately feels the role will communicate the role. Another holds that the actor can and should communicate the role to the audience regardless of his own emotions while playing the part. The third course, the one followed in this book, borrows the best features from the other two schools.

In essence, the proponents of this third school recognize that an actor has a better chance to project a role successfully if he is emotionally at one with his character. But this does not mean that he should become so emotionally involved in the play and his role that he loses sight of what he is attempting to get across. We know that an actor who cannot visualize the character and the environment can not get the character across by means of voice alone. We know also, that too emotional involvement is likely, in radio, to result in missed cues, wrong mike techniques, and other serious consequences. Thus it would seem that the best course for the radio actor to pursue is that of the middle course between the two extremes. In the creation of character, both objective and subjective methods are used, in proportion, perhaps, to the experience of the actor, and his natural ability to play a particular type of role.

In radio there are many problems of acting which definitely point out the need for understanding the use of techniques. Some of the more important are:

1. Translating printed words to speech.
2. The voice as the primary medium.
3. Reading versus talking.
4. Maintaining the "illusion of the first time."
5. Time limit on preparation.
6. Lack of audience stimulation.

7. Difficulty in actor visualization of the character under studio conditions.
8. Instructions and signals from the control room which are distracting to the actor.

The distractions which are peculiar to radio are reported graphically by Robert Landry:

... The actors hold their scripts firmly in one hand while gesticulating with the other. They move in and out of the immediate zone of the microphone. They raise and lower their pitch, laugh on cue, weep to order, scream by stop watch, mill about on the periphery of the scene, pretending to be a crowd of people. Or they change their voice, age, cultural inflection for a double. They act with their shoulders, their forward leg, their free hand, their larynx, the muscles of their face and the one eye they can spare from watching script and director.⁵

THE VOICE

ACTORS WHO HAVE HAD little radio experience are likely to forget the intimacy of the medium. Stage diction, which is excellent for the stage, is overly stuffy for the radio. Stage speech is designed to carry over the footlights and to the back of the house. In the theatre it fulfills its purpose, and sounds natural. But it sounds too deliberate and stilted—even affected—when used on the air. For the mike is a couple of feet from the actor, and the listener is half a dozen feet from his speaker. Radio speech is easy, natural, and spontaneous.

The voice should not only reflect the character, the play, and the mood; it should also reflect the location of the scene. For example, a particular radio play employs six locations in the scenes. The main character appears in all six—a taxi-cab, the busy lobby of an office building, a private office, a lonely wharf at midnight, a deserted warehouse, and a telephone booth. In each of these places he must show in his voice his reaction to the difference in the acoustical and physical surroundings.

⁵ Robert Landry, *This Fascinating Radio Business* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1946), pp. 291-92.

Probably one of the worst shocks a person ever has comes at his hearing for the first time a recording of his own voice. The reaction and lines do not often vary. "Why," he says with a horrified expression, "I don't sound like that!" The chances are that the reproduction is pretty close to actuality. It is true, however, that the electronic system of microphones, pre-amps, attenuators, compressors, radiation, pickup, and loud speaker quite often distorts the voice. Distortion may be favorable as well as unfavorable.

A person will sound different over the speaker in the control room from the way he does in the studio. There are several reasons: the type of microphone and his position in relationship to it; the overtones not normally picked up by the human ear, which, when picked up on a mike, are amplified; the resonance caused by the studio, sympathetic vibrations, etc. The point is that the radio actor should know the particular qualities of his own broadcast voice under varying conditions. He must take these factors into consideration in order to obtain maximum results.

THE CONSCIOUS EFFORT

NO ACTOR OR WRITER or director ever has enough background. Read, observe, talk to people, think. Read shows, radio scripts, legitimate plays, good novels and great classics. Try to understand the theory and practice of the drama, for you are part of it. Become acquainted with the interests of others—not just those of your actor friends, but people in all walks of life. The chances are that in your career you may never play the role of an actor, but you will play secretaries, bosses, laborers, doctors, lawyers, merchant-chiefs. The more background you possess, the more material you have to choose from. A wide choice is essential for your work in radio.

The actor must consciously observe all kinds of people and things, "must consciously re-educate the senses which in the course of living, and owing to prevailing habits of abstraction, have become dulled and feeble in response."⁶ Observation, plus memory

⁶ William H. Bridge, *Actor in the Making* (Boston: Expression Co., 1936), p. 56.

of emotion,⁷ unless so highly personalized that it inhibits artistic presentation, can be changed from one realm to another, provided the observation was made searchingly and the experience can be vividly recalled.

The idea of a conscious concentration period, regularly carried out, is not a new one. It may prove to be as important for the student as actual practice or mike work. Consciously recall your preparation of a particular role, mentally noting the high points. Try to recall the details of rehearsal, re-enact the sequence of moods, recall the flashes of insight which made you feel that the character was coming. Remember the performance—the nuances of characterization, the integration of your role into the play. The obvious mistakes are easily remembered. What about the little ones? Remember, think, criticize, go over past problems and apply them to future work.

PERSPECTIVE

CLOSELY ALLIED to the problem of presenting a character to the audience is that of the audience's response to the actor; and, in live situations, the actor's response to the audience. In the theatre this co-response between the actor and his audience, a pulsating, two-way reaction, has been called by a variety of terms and is dependent upon a variety of factors. The most common term for describing this mutual response is "empathy." Some of the factors affecting empathy are: the physical plant, the inherent mood of the audience, the type of play, the ethos of the actor, the aesthetic distance between the actor and his audience, and the physical distance separating them.

As perplexing as the problem is in the theatre, at least the legitimate actor is facing his audience, whereas his cousin in a radio studio is, for the most part, playing to an unseen, general audience. Let us examine the conditions under which the stage actor works, compare them with those of the radio actor, and attempt to arrive at a satisfactory substitute for empathy in drama on the air.

⁷ Required reading for the actor is the material on subjective approaches so emphasized by Boleslavski in his *Acting, the First Six Lessons*, and Stanislavski's *An Actor Prepares*.

In the theatre both the actors and the audience are in the same large enclosure, separated physically by the proscenium arch and physical space, separated mentally by the invisible "fourth wall" of the stage set, and separated emotionally into two distinct groups, with the actors in one group and the audience in the other.

The audience may consist of two hundred or two thousand people, at varying distances from the stage. It is the actor's job to play to all the audience, from the front row to the back. The actor must compromise by playing to the audience in the middle, hoping that the action will not be too sharply defined for those in the front of the house nor indistinct to the audience in the rear. Though the members of the audience compensate to some degree for their respective positions (by listening closer, paying more or less attention, etc.), there exists a variable space, physically, between the actor and the audience.

As has been mentioned, there exists also a mental and emotional distance between the actor and the audience. The audience and actor are separated by the "fourth wall," and are each in their own separate groups. The mental separation will also vary with the degree of illusion of the presentation. Generally speaking, the more representational the dramatic offering, the less critical is this difference in mental space, and the closer together the audience and actor come. Using similar logic, the emotional distance between the two groups is shortened when the two groups are drawn closer together by means of intensity of mood or action.

The perceptive actor on the stage feels the mood of his audience, feels the distance they are from him, is aware of their reaction mentally and emotionally to the play being staged, and is himself stimulated or not stimulated in return. It is this mutual response which forms the basis of empathy in the theatre. Before we consider empathy in radio drama, there are two additional factors of theatre acting which we should recall.

In a theatre, several hundred people have come together for a specific purpose, that of seeing the play presented. Here is a special audience in a true audience situation. You can no doubt remember when you, as a member of a theatre audience, heard a little titter from a few persons build up to a general laugh by all. It is just

so much easier for a person in the audience to respond, if a person near him is responding. Each segment of the audience stimulates another; and so the response of each person in the audience is ordinarily much greater than if he were viewing the play alone. The legitimate actor can, therefore, depend upon the audience to furnish some of the impetus for its own response.

Empathy in the theatre is predicated upon the relationships between the visible actor and the present audience. In radio the audience does not see the actor, nor does the actor see his audience. In those dramatic radio performances where there is a studio audience, this audience may give to the radio actor some of the stimulation which a theatre audience gives to the legitimate actor. The distinct disadvantage which may arise in this connection is that though the radio actor may, and undoubtedly does, realize that the studio audience is not the primary audience, he may unconsciously tend to play to the seen audience rather than to the unseen.

In the radio theatre there are no gallery seats; there are only front row center section seats. The physical distance separating the radio actor from his unseen audience is practically nil. The personal relationship between the actor and his audience is little, if any. In other words, the kind of empathy which exists in the theatre does not exist on the radio. What can exist, however, is a *form* of empathy which has been previously computed by the radio actor and is controlled by him during the performance. Taking his cue from the theatre, he can be guided by a principle which may be stated as follows:

Perspective⁷ is the mental, physical, and emotional distance between an actor and his audience.

The empathy, therefore, which exists between the radio actor and the listener is, in the main, subject to the previous thought of the actor. As there can exist no psychic response between the two, and as the audience is scattered, and to some extent diverted and remote, the actor must take the initiative. He asks the question of

⁷ Several kinds of perspective are mentioned in this book. Where it is capitalized, it is understood to mean that kind of audience Perspective herein examined.

each act, scene, and line: "Just how close should I be to the audience, mentally, physically, and emotionally—and just how close should they be to me?" He condenses this by asking, "What is the *Perspective*?"

Much the same as a play has an over-all rhythm or pattern of action, it also has an over-all *Perspective*. The director and actors must agree upon this collective *Perspective* of the play as a whole. This over-all *Perspective* will, of course, vary during the play. Each act and scene will have its own *Perspective* within the general pattern of the play as a whole.

To fix the problem of *Perspective* in radio drama in our minds, let us illustrate with two scenes chosen from *A Doll's House*, a play familiar to most.

In the first scene of our radio adaptation we meet the Helmers: Nora, the little-canary wife, and Torvald, the pouter-pigeon husband. While the actors are attempting to hold the attention of the audience (a prime requisite in radio drama), they are also setting the scene and introducing their characters. They are, in effect, asking the audience to settle back and get "squared away." And though the audience is participating, it is not participating to a great degree. Mentally? Actor and audience should be close enough so that the details of setting the scene and introducing the characters will be clear. Emotionally? Very little. Physically? At some distance. Back far enough so that they can "see," or perhaps more to the point, "comprehend," the whole scene and action involved.

In comparison to the above sequence, let us take the last one in our adaptation. Nora has defied the convention of the supremacy of the male and is going to leave Torvald's bed and board. The action is close, the point is critical, the climax is near, tension is great. At this point the actors want the audience right there with them. The audience is asked to be very close emotionally and physically and fairly close mentally.

The difference in desired *Perspective* in the two scenes is readily apparent and serves quite pointedly to illustrate what we mean by *Perspective*.

Perspective is the mental, physical, and emotional distance between the actor and his audience.

The use and misuse of stereotypes

IN ACTING, the word "stereotype" implies a character interpretation which, though it may be adequate, lacks individuality or originality. It would be an oversimplification to indulge in a blanket approval for or diatribe against this common radio practice. Let us examine the reasons and causes, and the effects of the practice from four different viewpoints: the medium, the script, the actor, and the audience.

THE MEDIUM

ANY RADIO PLAY is, of necessity, a briefly considered activity. The transientness of the radio program is a factor which has been mentioned by nearly every writer in the field. The fact that the point has been belabored does not make it less true. In such an impermanent medium it is not surprising that less stress is placed upon stature or quality than on speed of getting the job done as effectively as possible under the circumstances. The commercial nature of our system has many points to its credit, of that there can be no doubt. It also has some disadvantages, not the least of which is the necessity for stressing speed and sales results over quality; for the program which delivers the most sales per dollar is often more respected, in some circles, than a more artistic program which has less sales appeal.

The business of the commercial program is to appeal to as large

a group as possible. Thus the tendency to aim at the lowest common denominator in the audience so that the commercial will be heard by the highest number of persons. In aiming for a low common denominator, the practice of stereotyping is frankly an ideal way. It takes less time, effort, and money and is comprehended (if not appreciated) by most radio listeners.

The characters, settings, story, and all the other elements of the radio play come to the audience through one sense—that of hearing. And these patterns of sound must be definitive enough in nature that a very general and diverse audience can understand and appreciate them. Stereotyped shows and characters can be effective in this respect.

Another common cause of stereotypes is the directorial practice, mentioned in the preceding chapter, of not giving the actors their scripts until the day of performance. Many actors simply lack the training or capacity for quick and sure analysis. The result is that they develop a small stable of stock characters (old man, Irish cop, mature lead, Western sheriff, etc.) upon whom they can call at a moment's notice. Their performances may not lack that "professional sparkle," and they may be quite convincing, but in every part they play you will hear one of these set characters. This is not always the case, of course, but there is no doubt that this system tends to breed mechanical, stereotyped, half-formed characterizations.

THE SCRIPT

SOMEONE HAS ESTIMATED that drama on the radio consumes more words each day than are spoken from the Broadway stages in a year. Be that as it may, radio is an omnivorous consumer of script. In this huge market, script material, the written word, has become a commodity to be dealt in. Perhaps there is no real difference in dealing in words and dealing in textiles—but somehow the difference seems to be there. In the preliminary comments to the excellent collection of his radio plays, Morton Wishengrad speaks thus of the author's feelings.

A writer, because he is a writer, must deal necessarily in his own ego. He can tolerate the enforced loneliness of creation, he can withstand critical onslaughts, he can abide and overcome the misunderstanding of his editors, but he cannot stand anonymity. It is not a matter of publicity. It is a matter of recognition.

Novelist and poet write for financial reward but also in the faith that perhaps in a paragraph or a line of verse they are erecting a verbal monument to themselves, that they are creating something good which will give pleasure for many years. They have the satisfaction of the printed page and the bound volume, the substance of a line of type spelling out an author's name. This is an emolument of writing which compensates for sacrifice and is as important as the financial return.

Against this the radio writer opposes the twist of a dial, a puff of air, a momentary place in space and then—total evaporation. The book once laid down can be picked up; the play seen once can be seen again. But the radio program completed is lost forever. This galloping mortality of the radio script breeds dissatisfaction and soreness and festers into a writer's grudge against the medium.¹

The radio playwright has not been given the credit that is his due; that no one denies. The fight which he has been making for proper recognition has been bearing fruit, however, as the increasing use of authors' credits on shows will testify. But this does not change the picture of words as a commodity which is bought and sold. And though the demand is great, the supply exceeds it. But it is no secret that much of that which is accepted is inferior merchandise, often contracted for at bargain basement prices, the buyers receiving quality commensurate with the price they pay.

The necessity for turning out a piece of writing for a specific low price and of turning it out to meet a deadline results in scripts which are often not of the highest caliber. Under these conditions, writers cannot be condemned for not producing dramatic masterpieces. Their labors often end up as trite, unimaginative plays. They copy each other; they copy themselves. There is as much literary grave-robbing in author's alley as there is rhythm-robbing in Tin Pan Alley. And the results are the same. Like the majority of hit

¹ Morton Wishengrad, *The Eternal Light* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1947), p. xix.

tunes which are here today, gone tomorrow, the majority of radio plays have "a momentary place in space and then—total evaporation." Is it small wonder that these conditions make for stereotypes in radio plays and the characters who inhabit them?

Many professional radio people defend stereotyped plays, characters, and characterizations by pointing to the comparatively short length of the average dramatic show. "It is very difficult," they say, "to establish and develop several fairly complicated characters in the short space of thirty minutes (less time for open and close, station breaks, commercials, credits, etc.)." They maintain that one of the most important things for the radio actor to remember is that the character must be delineated with broad strokes of the brush. "Oh, certainly, detail is desirable, but not at the expense of listener comprehension. And listener understanding is best obtained by the large, swift and sure strokes of a wide brush on the canvas of sound."

This thesis, carried to its extreme—as it often is—in the scripting of a radio play, makes for characters which are so sketchily developed that the actor finds it difficult to root the characterization in concrete reality; to relate him to the situation, plot, and other characters. The necessary improvisation may well require of the actor an extra amount of labor and thought for which he may simply not have time. A radio acting job is a briefly considered activity, and there is a natural tendency to slide over any part which does not offer definite challenge or means of achieving a rewarding experience. These factors of scripting—hurried and hackneyed scripts, incomplete development, compression devices, and broad sweeping characterization—tend to set the pattern for stereotyped interpretation, both by directors and actors.

THE ACTOR

WE HAVE MENTIONED the relatively short period between the time the actor gets the script and the time the show goes on the air. We have said that in the short space of hours (or two or three days at the most) the radio actor must analyze the show and his part and have his lines well enough in mind to go on. In the theatre

the actor has time to grow into the part. Time to think the part through. Time to assimilate the play as a whole and formulate the pattern of climaxes. Time to weigh and judge each scene, each line, each word. Time to assume the several possible cloaks of the character to see which fits best the image of the character he is playing. Time to delve deeply into his character, to rehearse, to practice, to discuss his part with his fellow actors and his director. Time to observe, to think, to feel.

But the radio actor often can not take time to study his part. It is much easier for him to say to himself, "Hmmmm. Why, I had a part just about like this last week. Won't have to work much on it. After all, an Irish cop is an Irish cop!"

The actor who thinks in terms of stereotypes and stock characters is likely to find himself in an inescapable rut. His powers of selection and discrimination may become so aborted that any characterization which is challenging proves to be overwhelming to him. He takes the path of least resistance—stereotypes.

THE AUDIENCE

OVER A PERIOD of time radio has developed certain conventions to which the listener has become accustomed. He does not think that they are peculiar any more than the theatre-goer, who views a play laid in a room with three walls, thinks the stage unnatural. Similarly, the listener has built up for himself a "stable of stock characters," both from his listening, and from his previous experience. To illustrate this for yourself, try this one on an acquaintance. Ask him to play a little game with you. Here is the way it goes. You say to him: I name a character and you tell me how he looks. Ready?

YOU: The subject—a little country boy going fishing. Now—what is he wearing?

HE: Overalls.

YOU: Shoes?

HE: No—barefooted.

YOU: Hat?

HE: Yes, straw. Unraveling around the brim.

YOU: Shirt?

HE: Blue denim. Sleeves cut short.

YOU: Face?

HE: Freckled.

YOU: Nose?

HE: Pug.

YOU: Hair?

HE: Sandy.

YOU: Fishing pole?

HE: Yes. Bamboo.

Try it for yourself. Pick out several so-called stock characters and try them on several people. You will be surprised at the resemblance of the answers.

You will see just how much the audience has a pre-conceived notion or idea of what many characters should sound like. The general semanticists would have us look for the differences in people and things. And their scientific approach is perhaps a good thing. But, when the actor is projecting a characterization to a heterogeneous audience, he must clothe his character with cloth of a pattern that is at least partially familiar to a majority of his audience. One way—the easiest way—to do this is by using stereotypes.

The radio play is so short and so compressed, that if the listener misses even a few moments, he has missed a lot. And the audience does miss a part of a show—very often. For most listeners are subject to a great many distractions. There is the evening paper to be read, the phone to be answered, the neighbor in to borrow a wrench, the baby to change, time out to mix a drink, into the next room for slippers, out to the kitchen for a match, and so on and on. You must remember that the audience, though willing, may not be able to give to your program its undivided attention. If you have had any delusions about millions of listeners, each with his ears glued to the loudspeaker, oblivious to his surroundings, intent only on reaping the rich harvest of your pear-shaped tones—if that is your idea, hark back to the last time you yourself tried to “settle down for a quiet evening.”

Both of these factors: audience conditioning and audience distractions, tend to make it easier for the listener to understand a character which conforms to the limitations inherent in the listener

himself. In other words, if the play departs radically from a fairly established format, or if the characters are too complex to follow easily, then the average listener will probably lose interest. This certainly encourages stereotypes.

TOWARD A RESOLUTION OF THE QUESTION

MOST OF THE professional radio people will admit that the indiscriminate use of stereotypes is not desirable, to say the least. Some go so far as to say that stereotypes should never be used except in special cases, i.e. for certain satirical or farcical caricatures or stylized characterizations. The better course of action is to face the facts squarely and admit that a much more basic and less complex characterization is sometimes necessary. This is not to say that we should give up all attempts to make individuals of as many as possible of our radio characterizations. But some compromise is necessary, and even desirable.

This desirable compromise comes in the realm of what has been termed "simplified characters." It takes little imagination to reproduce a stereotype. It takes real imagination to create a character which is capable of being understood by the many but still has overtones which add to its stature in the minds of the few. It takes insight to create a simplified character, whereas a stereotype requires only the ability to copy. The stereotype lacks originality; the simplified character is an individual.

Certainly it must be admitted that radio, being aural, acquires some inherent disadvantages, but to state bluntly, as some have done, that the radio audience is a "blind" audience, is to create an erroneous impression. For the power of the spoken word is well-known, and the spoken word plus the imagination of the listener is as potentially great as the ear plus the eye. Many actors make a big mistake in not giving the listener a chance to use his imagination. There is a great deal of difference between presenting to the listener a stereotyped character which requires him to use little imagination, and in presenting a sharply defined yet simplified individual characterization which does require some effort for un-

derstanding on his part. People tend to undervalue that which comes to them too easily. But on the other hand, the listener also tends to disapprove of that character who, not taking into consideration the basic and inherent limitations of radio, is so complex that it requires of him unlimited attention to detail.

There is, of course, a happy medium. The actor strives to make his character as individualistic as possible under the circumstances. He tries to gauge just how many of the common elements he needs to put the character across to the audience, and just how many individual attributes he can employ to stimulate the listener's imagination so that the listener can recreate in his mind the sharpest possible picture.

There is much justification for the actor's complaint as to the short length of time the show is on the air and the fact that there is not time to develop a complex character. If, however, the actor remembers and truly applies the fundamentals of characterization, he can to a great degree overcome this. The unvarnished truth is that many radio actors tend to become lazy in their approaches to their jobs. Their habits become sloppy, much as do those of the automobile driver after several years of driving. The average driver comes to depend on habit and instinct. His driving habits become more and more slovenly. Then one day he talks when he should be looking and ends up with a crumpled radiator.

Often in the same manner do many professional (and amateur) radio actors approach their parts. Instinct and habit are their standbys until the day they wake up to find that their services are seldom desired. The radio actor must realize that here is a definite problem. A problem which can, however, be largely overcome by definite and systematic study of the principles of characterization and performance and by critical evaluation of his own work.

Apropos of the problem of audience diversion and distraction, we all know that there are certain dramatic programs which receive more concerted audience attention than do others. There is no law against using one's imagination. Cultivate yours, and your audience will be the greater for it.

The radio actor faces another problem in the necessity of pre-

senting a show without having had sufficient time to get acquainted with his character. To meet this challenge he must cultivate a quick, incisive, penetrating eye for those details which will bring his character to life in the shortest possible time. Because his medium demands such a consistent drain on his storehouse of knowledge and experience, he must continually replenish that storehouse. His must be such a deep well of dramatic resources that he is never drained dry.

Granted that the demands of radio are such that the audience is not given an opportunity to "look back." Granted also that a part of your audience will try—and thus be lost to you. Granted these, you will lose fewer of your listeners if you are able to give them the kind of show which makes them feel and think, unconsciously perhaps, "Here is really something!"

There is a necessity for broad strokes. Admitted. Broad strokes, yes—fuzzy strokes, no. Broad strokes in the proper places. Broad strokes which accentuate the structural details rather than try to replace them.

Each new characterization is a challenge. You must meet that challenge with every effort and resource at your command.

Projecting the action

HAVING CREATED the character, the actor must now communicate him to his audience. The communication of a character takes a different form in radio than in a medium which employs both sound and sight, for the character and his actions exist only in the mind of the listener. The listener's imagination must, therefore, be aroused and guided into those logical and emotional channels which will enable him fully to understand and appreciate the play. In this chapter we shall be concerned with those mental, emotional, and physical actions of the actor through which he attempts to recreate in the mind of the listener a living character.

VISUALIZATION

IN ANY ACTING situation the actor is faced with the problem of communicating his concept of the play and the character to the audience. In so doing he changes the unrealized or passive character that lies in the realm of his own mind into an active or kinetic character. It is this latter which he places before the audience. The stimulus, however, for bringing the character to life and keeping him real must, in radio, be generated by the actor himself. He does not have the stimuli of scenery, props, costumes, and makeup. Lacking these, his character must be self-generative. Without an inner spirit to motivate it, the characterization will most certainly lack that dramatic inspiration which is necessary for successful character portrayal.

Visualizing the scene and character. The most important asset that a radio actor can develop is that of being able to visualize mentally the character himself and his relation to the plot, scene, and the other characters involved. In order to do this the actor must develop the kind of imagination which is that "power of an active, associative mind to grasp and appreciate ideas in concrete terms—that is, in terms of sights, sounds, and other sensory images. Anybody not blind can see; anybody not deaf can hear; but only the imaginative person can see in his mind's eye or hear in his mind's ear."¹

This kind of imagination which Professor Dolman describes is most important in all the phases of characterization. It is, however, in the actual projection of the character that this ability must attain the maximum. For it is this kind of imagination which enables the radio actor to see in his mind's eye the situation, the setting, and the other persons in the play. There is another factor, equally important—he must be able to put himself in this picture. The actor puts on the robe of his role; feels, thinks, acts as a part of the visualized drama.

Miss Helen Hayes reports her feelings concerning this problem most graphically. "... Whether you play in the theatre, or pictures, or radio, imagination is essential. It works for you. The other evening I was broadcasting a scene that had a good deal of emotion. As I stood there by the microphone, I give you my word that I could see the room I was supposed to be in. I was in it."²

Such visualization is admittedly difficult, for the ordinary studio sights are not conducive to it. But it must be done, if there is to be a believable show.

Setting the mood. A character operates in a framework of persons, places, and events. As an individual he influences these factors, and they, in turn, influence him. As one cog in the drama, he contributes

¹ John Dolman, Jr., *The Art of Acting* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), p. 54.

² In Helen Ormsbee, *Backstage With Actors: From the Time of Shakespeare to the Present Day* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1938), p. 228.

to the mood of the whole, and that over-all mood certainly affects him.

Because "mood" is sometimes used very broadly, it may be well to set up a working definition: Mood is that pervasive vein of temper, prevailing spirit, or ruling passion of the play. There may be an over-all mood which is broadly defined or delineated, such as happiness or sadness. This may be qualified by approach, such as whimsical or sarcastic. The over-all mood of the play and the individual moods of each character may not exactly coincide, but each is certainly represented by overtones in the other. The over-all mood of the show is, of course, a composite pattern of the shifting and changing moods of the characters and action.

PROJECTING ACTION

WITH THE ESSENTIALS of this process of visualization well in mind, we may proceed to the study of the projection of action in radio drama. In radio, action is conceived by the actor, and completed by the listener. When the action is properly projected, the visualization of the listener more or less parallels that of the actor—which is the desired reaction. The closer the parallel, of course, the more effective the presentation.

If the paths of the actor and listener are to be parallel, the actor must not only recognize the pathway, but tread it himself. Action is as much visualization (and conception) as it is movement. Little good comes from merely going through the motions unless the heart is in it. The gasping breath of the radio actor who is bouncing on the balls of his feet (while supposedly running after someone) may sound satisfactory, from a mechanical standpoint, but it will lack the reality of the performance of the actor who, while doing the same bouncing, is really straining to catch up with the person ahead. Visualizing and feeling the action are, therefore, the first steps in projecting the action. In order to complete the projection we should turn for a moment to how and why the listener responds as he does.

Sensory stimuli. Man perceives the world about him by means of five major senses: hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling, and tasting. Each of these senses is separate, yet they tend through the years

of a person's life to become associative, so that each is correlated closely with the others. The pattern of sense perception is, therefore, a combination of individual senses which form highly associated and correlated patterns of memory, both conscious and unconscious.

It is this associative aspect of memory which is extremely important to the radio actor, for although he approaches the audience only through the sense of hearing, he can set in motion in the listener a train of interrelated stimuli. By use of verbal images which call to mind real life situations, laid in the proper emotional settings, the actor can guide the listener into the desired reaction: one in which the listener reacts associatively with a distinct impression of stimuli which are not at all auditory. "It was so scary I could feel myself getting 'goose pimples.'" "I could actually feel the murderer's hands around my neck." "It sounded so good I could actually taste it." "Geel I could just see that bloated corpse. The smell of it almost made me sick at my stomach." Whether or not these reactions are a commentary on the listeners themselves or upon the talent of the actors is not here relevant. The point is that memory patterns are made up of associative stimuli, and they can be initiated by appeal to either of the listener's dominant senses—seeing or hearing.

Although the listener's reactions to the stimuli are initiated by the actor, they are the product of the listener himself. The listener responds on his own level. This, in a nutshell, is the reason for the potential power of radio drama.

Motivations and response. In drama all actions, both physical and plot, should be motivated. If an action is not motivated, the listener may sense that something is "contrived" and thus be dissatisfied with what he hears.

Each action, large or small, motivates a response. These responses are in turn actions which motivate further responses. If one were to carry the concept of motivation to its logical conclusion, there would be an initial action, then a series of response actions of the same magnitude. The responses are not, however, of the same strength. As the play progresses, the latent energy of characterization and conflict is continuously being turned into the kinetic energy of

drama, and these forces, grouping and regrouping, make for the progression of action which brings on the climax and resolution of the play.

The motivational pattern of the play and its segments is indeed important to the actor when he is studying his role. In line with the concept of Perspective, the radio actor in particular must analyze the actions and reactions inherent in the smaller segments of the play—speeches, lines, even phrases. He should be constantly asking, "How does the character I am portraying react to this situation, to this line?"

Mental and physical action. All actions, even the simplest ones, combine physical and mental components. One of these usually dominates the other, although together they complement each other and make the action believable. If an action is primarily mental, it is not enough that the actor merely think; he must think in such a manner that the listener can—even if only faintly—"hear the wheels go round." Actions which are primarily physical might be either quite simple, such as shaking hands or sitting down; or quite complex, such as fighting or running. No matter which component is stressed, the point to be made is that each action is made up of both mental and physical components, which, if stressed properly, make for a more effective and realistic presentation.

Selection of key actions. Even though the medium of radio is, because of its plasticity, admirably suited to action, the audience is a diverted one, and the actor should try to select and emphasize those actions which are necessary, and not necessarily all of those which may be desirable. As a matter of fact, inclusion of all desirable actions may tend to "clutter up" the presentation to such a degree that the listener is bewildered rather than enlightened.

In selecting the actions to be emphasized, care must be taken to select those which are not primarily visual in their appeal. Radio can convey visual action, but not as well as it can convey an action which does not depend on sight alone for understanding and appreciation. Where it seems necessary to project actions which are primarily visual, the actor must be quite explicit. For example, a line which calls for hesitation and an indefinite answer might be

written, "Why . . . I . . . I . . . don't know . . for sure." The natural action of a person might be to put his hand up to his lips or mouth or scratch his head, or tug his ear lobe; or he may glance out into the distance, not focusing his eyes; or he might turn his head as his forehead started to wrinkle, then glance back to the questioner, shrugging his shoulders as he answered. If the radio actor were to go through all these motions, the effect of the action would become lost. He should, however, engage in some kind of appropriate action so as to give the listener a hint of what is going on, and the listener can project from there.

Natural movements. In real life there are many small actions and movements which are present in our everyday existence. Most of them are natural movements, such as shaking hands, tipping a hat, nodding at acquaintances, or adjusting pants legs when sitting down.

Because there are a host of these small, natural actions, it becomes quite necessary to streamline the action to avoid cluttering the action pattern. However, it must be remembered that the listener's understanding is based on associations with previous happenings. Whether he realizes it or not, the listener is conscious of the way things should go. Unless the actor makes the over-all action natural, by use of some of the smaller natural actions, the listener is likely to sense the wrongness of what he is hearing.

Business. By "business" is meant those meaningful actions, planned or casual, which are important to the play as a means of advancing plot, action, or character. These bits of business may take many forms, from the casual lighting of a cigarette, to removing one's shoes before tiptoeing up the stairs.

Stage directions are given much more completely in scripts for the theatre than in scripts for radio. In the latter the directions are generally very brief, and consist usually of directions on mental action or reactions, rather than physical action. In the main, the actor in radio is expected to supply the action implied by the lines. He must, therefore, note on his script in advance just what business the lines call for.

Important business should be so emphasized as to make certain

that it will be understood by the listener, and incidental business can be inserted to a varying degree for naturalness. Not all of the business is going to be caught by all the listeners—that is too much to expect. There is a degree of understanding, comprehension, and appreciation common to each audience segment, and it is to the primary audience that the major portion of the action will be aimed. The actor will try for some nuances that will be appreciated by the more discriminating listeners and employ some simpler actions for those who are not so discriminating.

BRINGING THE ACTION TO LIFE

WE MAY SAY, then, that the action embodied in radio drama should be common to the experience of the average listener. But the term “average listener” does not have a derogatory connotation. One script writer put it thus: “We radio people grossly underestimate people. In any radio audience there are people who have raised families, fought wars, traveled, read, seen plays and movies, worked, and who are likely to have a surprising understanding of human experience.” And so when we say that the action patterns should conform to listener experience, we are given fairly wide latitude.

What the actor must do is to make those actions believable. Almost any action may be made believable if it is clearly and selectively presented and conforms to the logical and emotional elements of the dialogue. The action presented will have a better chance to be understood and appreciated if:

It is clear and well defined,

Time is allowed for the action to occur and the listener to comprehend, and

The actors “. . . suit the action to the word, the word to the action. . . .”

Clarity of action. It is axiomatic that the action must be clearly portrayed. There should be no doubt in the mind of the listener as to what is actually taking place. As it was once put, rather cynically, “tell ’em what is going to happen, let it happen, then tell ’em what has happened.” This is not really bad advice, provided it is done in

the proper spirit. For the listener is understandably miffed if he is talked down to or acted down to. The radio actor must make his actions clear and well defined, for only thus does the listener benefit to the fullest extent. At the same time, he must not be obvious about it. In other words, the radio actor should aim for the highest common denominator, rather than the lowest one.

Allowing time for action. In radio drama the actor must, for the sake of naturalness, allow time for the action to take place, and yet, if full time is allowed, the pacing of the show may be slowed down and there will appear unfilled and unexplained pauses. In order to get around this seeming anomaly, the radio actor must develop a feeling for timing in action and movement which is a compromise between compression and true length.

The radio actor recognizes that there are simple, everyday actions which are so common that to compress them would detract from the reality of the action. Getting up from a chair, lighting a cigarette, smelling a flower—actions such as these should not be compressed (except perhaps for comic effect). On the other end of the scale are those actions which are complex and involved, which may very well be shortened or compressed without loss of any of the realism. Action may also be heightened or lengthened for dramatic effect. Drawing out the action is an excellent method for building increased suspense, so long as the motivation in so doing is clear to the listener.

Suiting the action to the word. The advice Hamlet gave to the players emphasizes the important relationship between what one says he is doing, and what one sounds as if he is doing. If, for instance, the lines and sound effects tell us that two characters are walking hurriedly down the street as they talk, it would sound incongruous for them to speak as if they were carrying on a conversation from the depths of easy chairs in the living room.

Physical actions are almost invariably transmitted to the radio actor's voice, and conversely, his voice mirrors the action and movement. If there is no muscular action, or insufficient action, the voice does not correspond to what the mouth is saying.

Gestures and movement. It is not only the French who speak with

their hands. More than we realize, our speech is punctuated, if not actually aided and abetted, by movement of our body and gesture of our hands. These gestures and bodily movements are a part of our normal speech habits which are seldom noticed. We are accustomed to the effect of movement on the voice, and when it is not there at the place we subconsciously realize it should be, there seems to be something missing. Now, the lay listener is not going to turn to his wife and snarl, "Those actors aren't really gesturing." He is merely going to lose interest because to him something is missing. The show lacks brilliance and sparkle and authenticity—it lacks life.

What actually happens, for instance, when a man gives a speech in front of an audience? He may hold up a hand to quiet them, and as he makes a point he may be shaking a finger. He may emphasize a violent portion with strong movements. On a benevolent note he draws his audience to him in an all-inclusive embrace. He picks up a paper or a book to prove a point, lays it down as he lays his case at their feet. He walks back and forth, looks at the crowd one moment, calls down Heaven as his witness, brings up coals from Hades to heap upon the brows of his adversaries. Well, this is a pretty colorful scene—admitted. But a good actor can, by normal gesture and bodily movement, bring to life every one of those images in the minds of his listeners because they are already there, lying dormant, waiting for release into activity.

Another, and equally important, reason for the actor to employ gesture and normal bodily movements is the effect which they have upon him in his delivery of his lines. I doubt that there are a dozen radio actors in the business who can stand stock still in front of a mike, not moving a muscle, and make a discerning listener believe that they are really going through a series of complicated actions such as those described in the previous paragraph. Those who could, would never do so, for they realize how much more effective they can be by using gesture and movement.

A caution, however, is in order. Big sweeping movements are not generally necessary to give the illusion of action. The actor must not become so wrapped up in his action that he forgets the micro-

phone. The mike stays in one place. The actor moves. But he must move in relation to that microphone.

Muscular tension. The microphone is a very sensitive instrument which has a sharply defined pickup ratio of volume to pitch and quality at certain points in its pickup pattern. The small change in the quality of a moving voice is not noticeable in the studio, but the microphone emphasizes those changes, and movement in the playing area must therefore be well calculated. Many movements—with the exception of fades—are too expansive to be carried out completely, as one would a gesture. Others would be too difficult for the actor to do and manage a script at the same time.

There are realists among directors and actors who insist that every pattern of action possible be acted out in front of the mike. On one juvenile show, for instance, the hero and villain have music stands handy and at the crucial point they place their scripts on the stand and engage in dialogue while pummeling each other lightly. One particularly realistic scene was unintentionally so. The villain slipped, grabbed the hero, and pulled him off balance. As they fell, the hero kicked over the mike. Although the kids probably loved it, the rest of the show was played on the sound mike, and the bill for the microphone was seventy-eight dollars.

Realism may be achieved by less strenuous means. By tensing the right muscles at the right times, by slight movements which project correctly over the microphone, the actor can project the illusion of action. The murderer is strangling the heroine, and it sounds horribly real over the air. But this may be what is actually going on in the studio. The murderer and heroine are facing each other across the mike. M. has his script in his left hand, and is grasping his left forearm with his right hand. His left arm is trying to pull away from the grip of his right hand. The hand squeezes harder and harder. These movements and tensions are directly transferred to M.'s voice as he pants and mumbles while doing his dastardly deed. The heroine, her eyes on the script in her right hand, follows the lines, and at the same time grasps and presses on her own throat with her left hand. Her cries become more frantic as

she increases the pressure, her struggles become weaker as she imagines herself sinking into oblivion.

When each person is controlling his own situation, there is little likelihood of microphone accidents such as the one described above, and the results are equally effective—often more so. Muscular tension, at the right time, place, and degree, is the most effective method of simulating large or complex action.

In summary: The actor's first problem in projecting the action is one of visualization. He must visualize the character himself, then be able to place him in a particular setting. The actor mentally projects himself into this setting and thus is better able to transmit it to the audience.

In radio, action is conceived by the actor and completed by the listener. The actor conceives the action by a process of visualization, then projects this concept to the listener. He selects key characteristics and actions of the character to get across the main facets of the character and the movement, and supplements them with the smaller, incidental actions which give added naturalness and distinctness to the character and the play.

The actor is careful to motivate the actions he originates and to be properly motivated by those actions which affect him. He realizes that an action is both a mental and a physical process and that each component complements the other, although one dominates the particular action or reaction. He makes the actions believable by selectively presenting action that is clear and well defined; by allowing time for the action to occur and the listener to comprehend; and by "suiting the action to the word, the word to the action."

He punctuates his dialogue with gestures and bodily movement, for they transmit themselves to his voice and punctuate what he is saying. In all of his bodily movements and gestures he is careful to remember that the mike stays in one place. He makes physical actions come alive by changes in muscular tensions which reflect themselves in his voice, for he remembers at all times that the voice must correspond with what his mouth is saying.

The radio actor works in a medium which is, because of its plasticity, an exceptionally good medium for portraying action. Working, as he virtually does, in the mind of his listener, he is unhampered by space or time limitations, and he has the whole of the listener's experiences upon which to draw. With these as his challenge and his opportunity, the radio actor can paint a canvas of sound which will be as moving and thrilling to the listener as a picture in three dimensions.

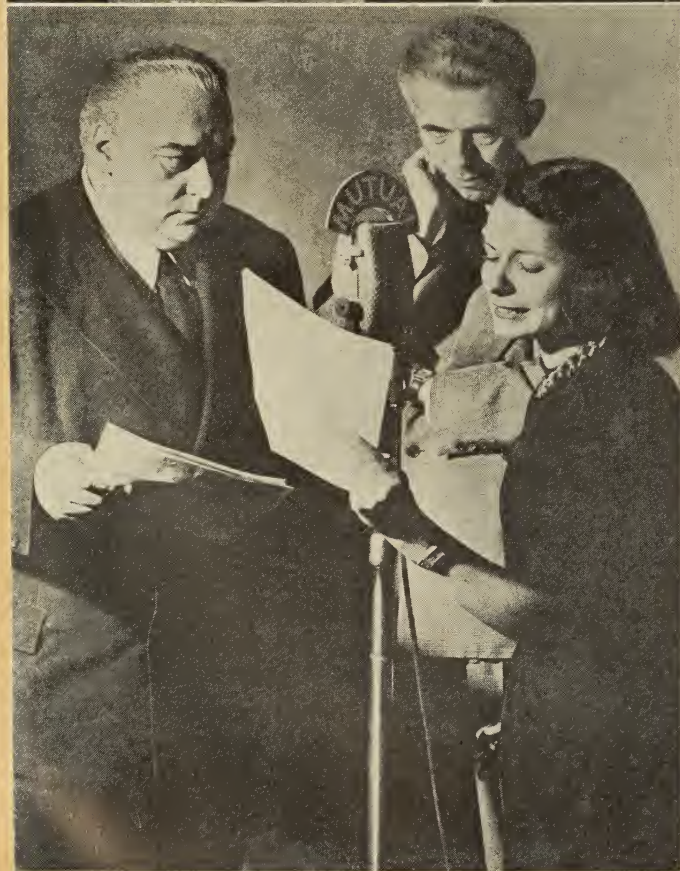
HIGH POINT." Actress Leslie Woods probably bemoans the day this picture was taken. But in one important respect it is highly flattering, for it dramatically illustrates how the good radio actress "throws" herself into her role. Note the marked-up script of the actor playing opposite. ("International Airport," courtesy, Mutual Broadcasting System.)



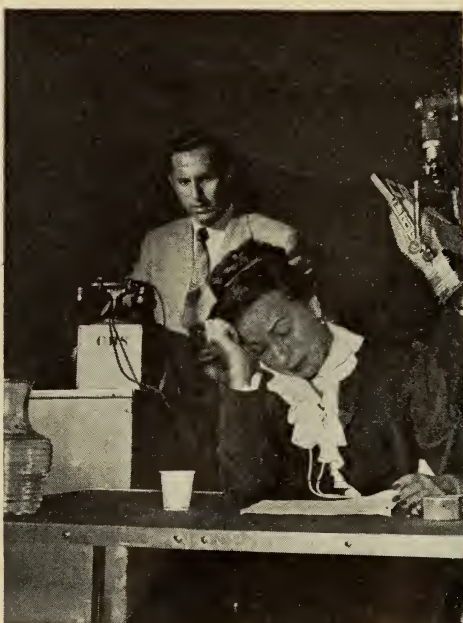
"IN THE MOOD." Often a closer communion between actors can be obtained by placing the actors on the same side of the microphone. In this scene between Anne Baxter and Charles Bickford each is sharing the feelings and emotions of the other, and the close communion between the two characters is intensified by the actors' position. Notice too, how they hold their scripts in the minimum response area of the microphone. ("Lux Theatre," courtesy, Columbia Broadcasting System.)



"I'MA TELLA YOU, MIKE"—And the mike takes it without a murmur. Its little ribbon feels so good because J. Carrol Naish is speaking directly on beam, and punctuating his speech with appropriate gestures. ("Life with Luigi," courtesy, Columbia Broadcasting System.)



"LET ME HEAR IT NOW." Sometimes the director can better guide an actor over a particularly tricky spot by coming out of the control room and listening to the actor in the studio. Here, Director Wynn Wright (center) has suggested that Sybil Trent work a little more cross mike to get the desired effect. Craig McDonnell stays on mike, feeding cues, while Miss Trent works for just the right intensity. ("Official Detective," courtesy, Mutual Broadcasting System.)

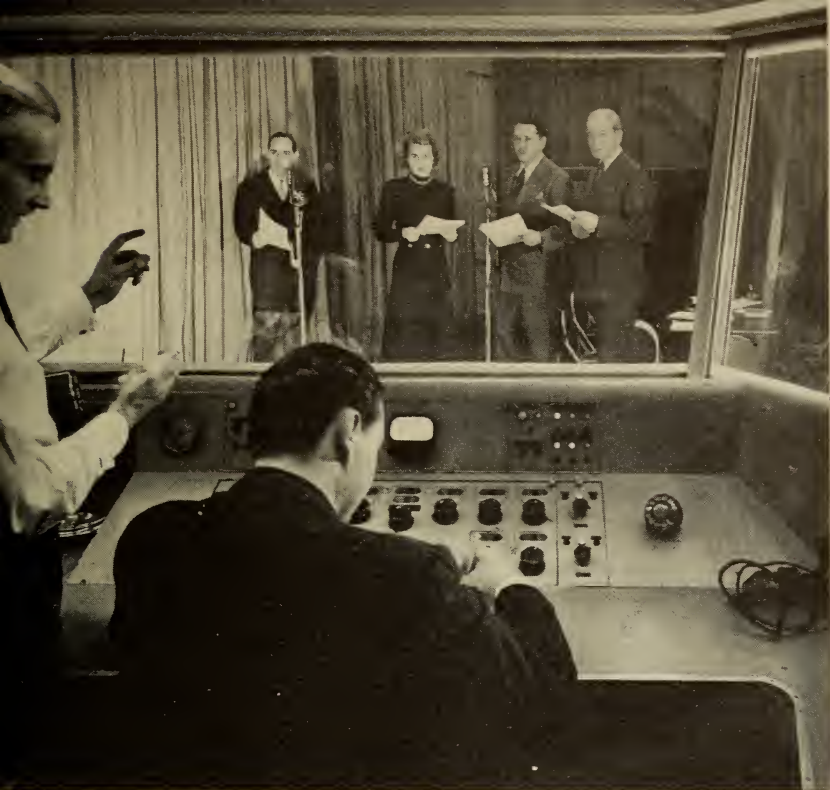


"SORRY, WRONG NUMBER." Pictured here is Agnes Morehead during her fifth performance of Lucille Fletcher's classic. It is unusual for an actor to play from a sitting position. In this particular case there are two reasons for it: first, a virtuoso performance demands the utmost conservation of the actor's strength; and second, it helps Miss Morehead to fall more completely into the role of a bedridden invalid. Soundman Berne Surrey is in the background. ("Suspense," courtesy, Columbia Broadcasting System.)



PROJECTING ACTION. This scene from the dress rehearsal of *Roadhouse* illustrates very clearly the use of muscular tension by the actor to put across a particular action (Richard Widmark, Ida Lupino, Lloyd Nolan.) ("Screen Guild Theatre," courtesy, National Broadcasting Company.)

"TAKE TEN." During breaks the actors—here Claudette Colbert and Robert Ryan—often work over difficult scenes among themselves. It is to be hoped that Miss Colbert does not forget to remove the gloves and jangly bracelet before going on mike. ("Screen Guild Theatre," courtesy, American Broadcasting Company.)



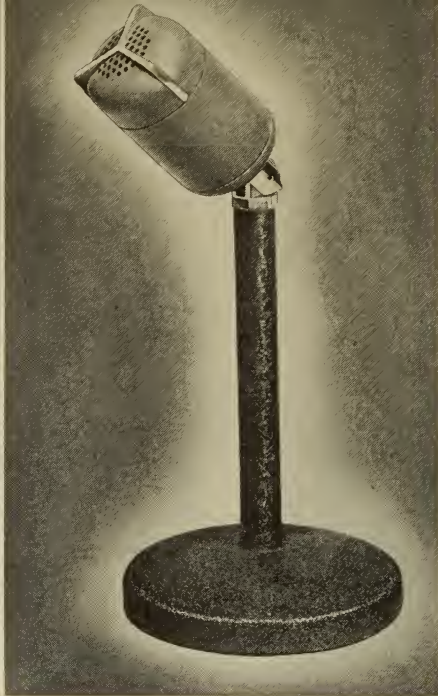
"ALL EYES ON CONTROL." ("Living, 1950," courtesy, National Broadcasting Company.)

"DOWN, DOWN, A DOWN." *One of the secrets of the continued popularity of "Inner Sanctum" is the ability of producer-director Himan Brown to obtain the exact levels and balances he needs.* (Courtesy, American Broadcasting Company.)

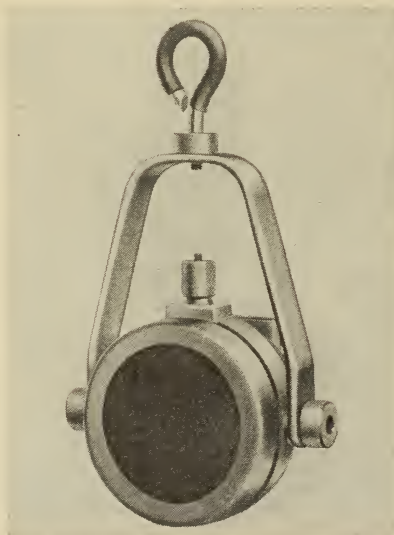




The Western Electric 639B microphone. (Courtesy, Western Electric and Altec Lansing.)



The Western Electric 633A microphone. (Courtesy, Western Electric and Altec Lansing.)



The Western Electric 618A microphone. (Courtesy, Western Electric.)



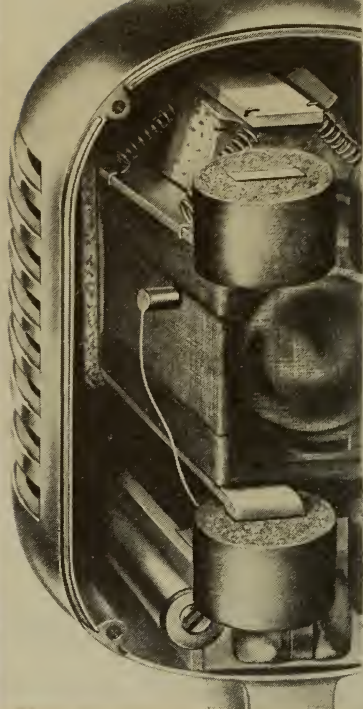
Rear view of the RCA 77-D, showing the directional control switch. (Courtesy, R.C.A.)



RCA microphones
most often used in
radio broadcasting.
Left to right: 44-BX,
KB-2C, (top) 88-A,
77-D. (Courtesy,
R.C.A.)



The Shure 556 microphone. (Courtesy, Shure Brothers.)



Interior view of Shure 556. The front portion of the case has been removed. (Courtesy, Shure Brothers.)



The RCA BK-4A microphone. (Courtesy, R.C.A.)



The Altec 21B microphone. (Courtesy, Altec Lansing.)

Preliminary to performance

IN THIS CHAPTER we shall examine some of the practices, problems, and techniques of presentation with which the radio actor should be familiar prior to the rehearsal and performance of the show. Some of the topics covered are of a general nature; for example, the actor's relationship with his fellow workers. Others, such as microphone techniques, are background of a more specific nature and are closely connected to the business of performance.

THE PRODUCTION TEAM

ONE OF THE MOST important aspects of radio drama production is the teamwork required for a successful show. The interrelationship between all the members of the production team—the director, actors, sound men, musicians and engineer—is an extremely important one. Indicative of that importance is the relationship between the actor and the director.

In commercial radio the actor is paid to perform, and the director is paid to direct the performance. Neither person could effectively present a show without the help and assistance of the other, and each realizes this. There are, of course, some very popular actors who, because they overestimate their own capabilities, are extremely difficult to direct. There are also directors who consistently underestimate the abilities of their actors, and, feeling that the burden of the show is upon their own shoulders, attempt to *dictate* each in-

flection rather than *direct* the actor in the proper portrayal of his character.

Competent professionals, however, recognize the value of the assistance which is given by the other person involved. The director who realizes that an actor is having a little difficulty in obtaining the right interpretation of the character or lines works with the actor to get exactly the right characterization. When, however, air time approaches, and it is necessary for the director to become more abrupt in his direction, the good actor recognizes the need and attempts to cooperate to the fullest extent.

In student or non-professional groups the relationship may not be quite so clear cut. The director may be an instructor, or at the least an experienced senior student. Because the situation is not a commercial one, there is a tendency on the part of some to excuse faults of production and acting on the grounds of inexperience. Actually, this is false logic, for any show which goes out on the air—be it commercial or non-commercial, public service, educational, or entertainment—is in competition with other shows for the ear of the listener. The value of the performance as a learning device for the student is not decreased by turning out a competent job. One way to achieve this competence is for the director and actors to work together.

Except in the most abortive situations, which occur in both non-professional and professional performance, the director's (or producer's) is the final word. This the actor should realize. Most of us, when given a job to do, like to know just what is expected of us by our direct superior. The actor is no exception, and the director would probably answer his question by emphasizing the following actor attributes:

1. *Sincerity and sensitivity.* In his approach to the portrayal of any role, the competent actor, be he professional or non-professional, will, during rehearsals and performance, give sincere attention to those things which are conducive to effective performance. Sincerity in approach helps in achieving a delicate understanding of the role, resulting in a more sensitive portrayal of the character.

2. *Willingness to work.* The professional director expects of his

actors whatever work it takes to deliver a good show. If it involves a rehearsal period of three hours without a break, so be it. Most directors are considerate of the actors, and the actor reciprocates by giving his utmost. In a non-professional situation, student or amateur, this aspect of professionalism should be emphasized.

3. *Ability to take direction.* Most actors are willing to take direction, for they realize the necessity of quick and thorough guidance in a medium where time is of the utmost importance. But not all actors are able to take concise direction and immediately apply it. Those who have trained themselves to immediate and effective response are the actors in most demand.

4. *Cooperation.* The director must ask for cooperation from all the members of the cast and crew if an effective show is to result. The actor is conscious of his obligation not only to cooperate willingly with the director, and the others in the cast and crew, but also to actively show his willingness to cooperate.

5. *Initiative.* Self-initiated activity on the part of the actor is certainly desirable when that activity is channeled in productive directions. There is nothing quite so enervating to the director as having to spell out to the actor every step in the acting process. There is, however, little that is more injurious to the show than the actor who is so eager that he makes a nuisance of himself. Initiative, wisely applied, is gratifying to the director, and makes for a smoother and better show.

6. *Alertness and attention.* Even if rehearsal time were unlimited, close attention on the part of cast and crew would make for a better show. Time and timing being as tight as it is in radio, it is doubly important that each member of the cast pay strictest attention to the details—all details—of the rehearsal and performance.

7. *Studio conduct.* Last, but by no means least, the director has a right to expect strict adherence to studio conduct. The rules for studio etiquette are not nearly so involved as Mrs. Post's rules for social etiquette, nor as simple as Li'l Abner's "Code of the Hills." Briefly, the director expects the actor to act like a gentleman (or a lady); to be prompt for all calls, both rehearsal and performance; to refrain from argument or heated discussion; to indulge in no

objectionable clowning or horseplay; and to refrain absolutely from drinking immediately before or during rehearsal and performance. The director does not expect his actors to be angels in disguise. He does expect them to conduct themselves in the manner which has proved to be most conducive to good performance.

FREEDOM OF INTERPRETATION

SELDOM DOES AN ACTOR possess absolute freedom to interpret the character or lines in exactly the way he believes they should be interpreted. There are natural restrictions in most arts, and radio acting is no exception. The actor takes these restrictions for granted; works with them instead of around them or in spite of them.

Because his is a general audience, his interpretation cannot be too complex. Because his is a presentation involving teamwork, he must cooperate with his fellow players. The director of the show exerts some restriction in his capacity as arbiter. The producer (if there is one) or production supervisor has certain ideas that should be followed. Continuity of style, type and content are maintained not only in the selection of shows, but in their production. It follows that the actor must gear his approach to the general mood and style of the series.

AUDITIONS AND REHEARSALS

THERE IS WIDE variation in the pattern of auditions and rehearsals when all facets of the industry are examined. Each director chooses the method (or it is chosen for him by the producer or production manager) which best suits his particular setup. But no matter which pattern is used, the purposes remain the same. Auditions are designed to acquaint the directors (production or talent) with the talents of a particular person; and rehearsals are set up to get the show ready for airing within the budgetary time allowed.

The networks and most large stations which have production facilities set aside specific periods for general dramatic auditions. These general auditions are designed to acquaint those responsible for the hiring of talent with new talent. Each auditioner is given from three to five minutes to display his dramatic wares, which he

himself provides. Cold copy is sometimes given to the person auditioning so that the auditors can determine his ability to understand quickly and adjust to unfamiliar materials.

The person passing these auditions is eligible for work on that particular station or net origination point, and a card containing information about him and his various abilities is placed in the talent or casting file for reference by the production directors. The person who does not pass the audition is generally required to wait a specific time before he again appears. During that time he presumably works on his weak points, which have been pointed out by the listening board. Needless to say, the standards set by listening boards vary widely in different stations, networks, and locales. For the most part, however, they range from high to very high, for there are a great many more people who would like to be "on the radio" than there are available places.

The person who is beginning should make every effort to put his best foot forward in his first attempt. He should, in the first place, have satisfied himself that he has a better than even chance to pass the audition. He should carefully choose material which will display his best talents. A director will be much more impressed by two or three selections which, though not widely divergent, show what the actor can do well, rather than by a large number of quickies which serve only to demonstrate that the actor is something less than a virtuoso. Another point to remember in selecting audition material is that the directors who will be judging have probably heard some of the more popular speeches or scenes dozens or hundreds of times. The auditioner should attempt a selection of material with which most directors would be familiar, but which has not been "done to death." He cannot be certain that his is fairly fresh material, but he can keep the point in mind.

On a professional level, specific auditions are generally on a more restricted—often invitational—level. In specific auditions (also called voice tests, casting auditions, or casting sessions) selection is made for a particular cast or for a particular role. Though the audition may be open to all qualified people, it is more often closed to all except those whom the director feels would be suitable in the play

to be cast. The director makes a list of two or three possible players for the major roles and contacts them directly or through the casting office. He may hold personal auditions or group auditions.

The director does not always do all the hiring of actors. In a series where two or three characters form the nucleus of the cast for each show, the hiring may be done by a production board on which may be representatives of the sponsoring company, advertising agency, network, talent agency, and production agency. Procedures vary greatly, and the practicing radio actor must keep himself informed of the different levels of hiring.

In non-professional situations, both amateur and student, the person who is directing the show is generally given more latitude on the selection of actors. School and amateur groups should be scrupulously careful to avoid any appearance of cliquishness. Everyone should be given an opportunity, and those who are patently the best should be selected for performance.

In both professional and non-professional work, there are often conflicts in the schedules of those being considered for roles. For instance, actor A has been cast in Show A which is scheduled for rehearsal and broadcast from 12:30 until 5:30. He has agreed to be in this show, and thus has made a "commitment." Now comes an opportunity to play on an evening show which is scheduled to rehearse and air from 4:30 until 9:30. There is a conflict in the two times, and the director of the evening show may or may not accept the conflict. If he accepts the conflict, he allows the actor to report late. Some directors have a policy of accepting no conflicts whatever, and others are more lenient. At any rate, the actor's commitment is to the afternoon show, and unless he is able to obtain a release from the director (for which he would not ask unless there remained plenty of time for the director to obtain a new person) he is obligated to stick to his commitment.

In the case of a non-acceptable conflict, the professional actor is generally very hesitant about asking for a release from previous commitment. Not only is it "not cricket," but it may leave a bad taste in the mouth of the first director. The director of an afternoon kid show would probably be happy to release an actor friend who

had an offer of a role in a topnotch evening show—a role which might add greatly to his professional stature. But if the actor consistently asked for releases, the director would probably be more hesitant about casting him. As for deliberately breaking commitments—it is just not done.

Professional radio's necessarily strict attention to commitments and conflicts should be emulated by non-professional radio people. One of the most certain methods of insuring professional program caliber in non-professional groups is to maintain professional standards in casting and rehearsing. In student radio groups especially, the instructor must insist on strict adherence to commitments. The student who "gets by" in school is due for a rude shock if he attempts the same professionally.

Rehearsal patterns are as variegated as were the colors of Joseph's coat. The director's problem is to get the program ready for air. If the show is being done professionally, the director has budgetary restrictions. In non-professional shows, the director, using unpaid talent, has restrictions on the time he can ask his cast to give. We may say, in general, that the director's job is to prepare the show as efficiently and well as possible in the time he has at his disposal. Because the actor can work much more efficiently if he realizes the problems of the director and how the director is attempting to solve them, he should understand just what the director is attempting to accomplish in each segment of the rehearsal period. An average rehearsal period might consist of the following: Table rehearsal, scene and line rehearsal, microphone rehearsal, integration rehearsal, spotting rehearsal, dress rehearsal, and air show. Sound and music rehearsals are the primary concern of the director, the sound and music men, and the engineer, and as such are not the concern of the actor.

Preliminary rehearsals are probably the exception, rather than the rule, in most commercial shows. This rehearsal may run from one to three hours with the whole cast participating, or it may be an individual conference between the director and each member of the cast. There may be one or two or three roles which carry the majority of the lines, and these actors only may be called for a preliminary

rehearsal. In these preliminary rehearsals the director's objective is to give the cast a chance to become acquainted with the script, and to iron out any bugs in characterization or character interrelation. The actor can then more effectively study his role. The preliminary rehearsal, when it occurs in professional work, may take place two or three days ahead of the broadcast. On a non-professional level, this preliminary rehearsal is often scheduled several days, perhaps a week, before the show is to be aired. The other rehearsal segments described below are part of the regular rehearsal period on the same day and just prior to the airing of the show. They usually last from three to five hours.

The *table rehearsal* is a straight read-through of the lines without any sound or music. If the actors have received their scripts in advance, they are reasonably familiar with the lines and now they are able to work with each other, hear how the voices of the others sound, get a truer picture of the motivations, project themselves more into the character. The director, during this rehearsal, is noting flaws in characterization, misreading of lines, lack of harmony among the characters, builds and climaxes, and a host of other preliminary but important little details. He seldom stops the rehearsal to make a correction, for this is the actor's time to show him just what he (the actor) has in the way of characterization. The director also gets a preliminary timing during this rehearsal. He has previously timed the musical and sound portions of the show, and has a rough idea of the timing on the open and close. After the table rehearsal the director may make preliminary cuts, call attention to various points of interpretation, make any corrections he deems necessary.

The *scene and line rehearsal* may proceed straight through, with the director interrupting for a rereading of those lines or scenes which need further work, or he may just pick out those places which, in the table rehearsals, showed obvious need for more intensive rehearsal. If he has plenty of time, he will prefer the former; if not, he will use the latter.

The first two rehearsals were off mike. Now comes the *microphone rehearsal*, still without sound or music. During this rehearsal the director makes notations for levels and balances, gets an even more

accurate timing on the dialogue, and notes remarks on characterization or interpretation. If time permits, it is preferable to go through all the dialogue part on mike. If time does not permit, the director may choose representative scenes to insure proper voice projection, levels, and balances. A short conference after this rehearsal sets characterizations and line readings.

The *integration rehearsal* is just what the name implies. The director has shaped and painted three areas on his canvas of sound, and his problem is now to blend them together into one harmonious unit. During this rehearsal the music and sound and voices are integrated. At the outset the director, for the benefit of the actors, may have the musicians (or the person running the music wagon, if recorded music is being used) run over particularly significant music cues, and the sound men go over any unusual sound patterns. The director may then prefer to go straight through the script, noting the rough portions, or he may prefer to stop and rehearse each difficult segment of the script until it is done correctly.

In the *spotting rehearsal*, those segments which are still rough are smoothed out. These may be sound, music, or voice, or any combination. Some directors prefer to reverse the order of the integration and spotting rehearsals. When this is the case, they work over the portions of the script which employ any two of the three groups (voice and music, music and sound, voice and sound), and when these individual segments are set, they are then integrated with the whole script in the integration rehearsal.

The *dress rehearsal* should, theoretically, be just exactly the same as the air show. Though it seldom is, this is what the director is working toward, and the actor should realize it and help in every way possible. Contrary to the old saying that poor dress insures a good performance, it is often just the opposite. The director's problem after a good dress is to keep his people from letting down on the air show. The professional actor will make every effort to extend himself and insure the finest possible performance. After the dress rehearsal, the director gives the cast and crew his final suggestions, gives them a short break before the show.

The rehearsal pattern may be altered to fit certain cases. When

time is at great premium, the scene and line rehearsal may be combined with the mike rehearsal, sound and music spotted in, and the next run-through used as the dress. If time and facilities permit, the director may choose to have a transcription made of the integration or first dress rehearsal. A playback and discussion of the rehearsal performances will generally aid all concerned in giving a more polished air performance.

FLEXIBILITY IN RADIO ACTING

FLEXIBILITY is a requisite for the actor in any medium, and radio is no exception. We have mentioned the flexible characterization which the actor brings to the first rehearsal. Another reason for flexibility in acting stems from the nature of the medium itself. In radio drama there is generally an elision in character progression because of the time limits of the program and the compression which is necessary. Progression of action is generally swift, as is plot. The use of short scenes bridged by transitions may require a character to age fifteen years in fifteen seconds. Or just the opposite—he might be fifteen years younger if a flashback is used. Montages, an often-used compression device, call for very quick changes in mood as well as action. The quick character changes which are inherent in most dramatic radio programs make it very necessary that the radio actor be flexible. From the director's point of view, the flexible actor is much easier to work with. This in itself is a convincing reason why the actor should develop flexibility.

Doubling also calls for the ability to quickly change one's style of acting. Often the persons who play secondary characters are also called upon to play also one of the minor characters. The American Federation of Radio Artists, the union of announcers, actors, and singers, sets up certain limitations on doubling. An actor may play one other role beside his own in a show. He may also play in crowd scenes. But if he plays more than these, he is to be paid extra. Certain types of documentary shows are not included in this restriction.

The actor should be told what doubles there will be when the script is given him. Sometimes the double will be indicated on the cover sheet of the script. For instance:

BIG TOWN¹*Death at the Wheel*

Episode #40

BY

JERRY MCGILL

Cast

NARRATOR	1ST TROOPER (<i>double</i> JUDGE)
STEVE WILSON	GUARD (<i>Scene 3 . . . double</i>)
LORELEI	2ND TROOPER (<i>double</i>)
HARRY THE HACK	POLICE OFFICER (<i>Scene 1 . . . double</i>)
BILL SMITH	WOMAN IN SCENE 1 (<i>NURSE double</i>)
JUDGE	1ST CHILD (GIRL) <i>Final Scene</i>
PROFESSOR	2ND CHILD (BOY) <i>Final Scene</i>
WOMAN DRIVER	3RD CHILD (<i>double</i> 2ND CHILD)
NURSE	VOICE (<i>Scene 1</i>)
DOCTOR (<i>NARR. double</i>)	COURT CLERK (<i>VOICE double</i>)

Script writers generally make an effort to keep widely spaced those scenes which employ doubles. Even so, the actor must be careful to use a different type of voice and phrasing for the character to be doubled.

NARRATION

Nature and function of the narrator. When radio drama was first introduced, it became apparent that there were certain limitations in this new medium which made it difficult to project drama successfully. The audience had not been trained to listen with its mind's eye, and what are now called "conventions of radio" had not been established. The person who was used to seeing, found it difficult to obtain the visual image merely by listening. In an effort to make the story and action clearer, the announcer would describe the scene and sometimes even the characters. Out of this practice has come the modern use of the narrator as a full-fledged person whose most

¹ Broadcast on NBC, June 28, 1949. Sponsor, Lever Bros. (Lifebuoy.) Agency: Sullivan, Stauffer, Colwell, and Bayles, Inc.

important job is to act as an intermediary between the illusionistic aspects of the show and the realistic and familiar surroundings in the home of the listener. The narrator generally acts in one or more of the following capacities: to tell the story, set the scene, describe or advance the action or plot, set the mood or pacing of the show, or introduce certain characters.

Scope. Narration may be in either the first, second, or third person. Third person narration—the story-teller and scene introducer—has been and still is the most used of the three (see *The Death of the Average Man*, pp. 309-327). When narration in the first person is used, the narrator is definitely a character in the drama and as such is generally representational. When he turns to the audience, he speaks *presentationally*, but he speaks *in character*. It is this kind of narration that is used in *The Hitch Hiker* and *My Uncle Willy*. (See pp. 271-308.) Second person narration has been used so infrequently that it is difficult to describe. We have, however, seen an excellent example of effective second person narration in Joseph Ruscoll's *The Test*. Another excellent and slightly different approach is used in "Dragnet."

Split narration is the term which is given to the breaking up of the narration between two or three people. When this device is used, there is generally one person who is the main narrator, and the others act as contrast or variety and serve also to heighten the dramatic effect. In the shows where this device is used the actor must be exceedingly careful to distinguish between the speeches labeled Voice 1, Voice 2, etc., which are narrational, and those similarly labeled speeches given by real, if briefly heard, persons.

Commercial narration is a device which is often used on soap operas and kid strips. In this approach the ethos of the characters are transferred to the commercial message without actually having the persons in the play step out of character. When a person steps out of the play, the illusion is gone, but the close association of the narrator with the characters does not destroy the illusion; and the narrator is thus shouldering the mantle of character while effectively advising the mother on her choice of soap and the child on his choice of breakfast food.

The relative importance of the narrator may range from the chief character in the story, such as the narrator in many of today's psychological melodramas (the so-called "stream-of-consciousness" type); down to a necessary device such as the narrator who in 15 or 20 seconds introduces a new act. But in any show in which he appears, the narrator has an extremely important job. His is the obligation of getting the audience into the right mood, of explaining to them any details which may be necessary, of carrying the story detail when necessary, of bridging the various sequences, of pacing the show, and, in the case of the commercial narrator, of selling the product advertised.

MONTAGES

A MONTAGE is a progression of short scenes embodied in the regular structure of the play as a compression device, which may serve to quickly advance or change the exposition, action, mood, time, plot, or place. The scenes or vignettes (sometimes a series of single speeches) are not fully developed, and they are generally framed by sound or music, or both, which serve as the transitional devices not only between the vignettes, but also between the montage and the rest of the play.

The montage is an effective device, but, like all devices, it should be sparingly used for maximum effectiveness. Montages may be used in nearly any part of the play, but they are most potent when set up before a climax. The actor must realize the degree to which he must build before the montage comes in, for the danger lies in reaching a climax too soon, then being forced to continue on a high emotional plateau until the lines have caught up with the mood. The montage, to be most effective, must be progressive. If the overall effect of the montage is that of advancing action, the advancement must be started smoothly, yet with an overtone of heightened drama, then increased in both spirit and mood as the montage goes to completion.

Granted that the montage has been very effectively used as a device which is largely expository and less dramatic, there is, in the very nature of the montage, something of the theatrical which if

properly used is most effective. Montages may employ both rising and falling action, and when such is the case, the actor passes the crest so quickly that he must be able to feel very definitely the descent. In the montage all characterizations must be very quickly established. New characters which come into the oh-so-brief picture must be complete and detailed. The listener must get a quick but penetrating and decisive and clear look at the character before he is swallowed up. More familiar characters must be very definite in what they are trying to accomplish. If this effect is achieved, the listener will listen with heightened interest to the following scenes. See page 367 for an excellent example of the montage.

RADIO DICTION

DICTION has in recent years become a general term which embodies not only the choice of words, but the mode and manner of speaking them, style of delivery, even pronunciation and enunciation. These connotations are of particular use in describing dramatic dialogue, for if the illusion of the first time is retained, the voices we hear are not actors reading, but real people speaking—choosing their words and speaking them.

At a risk of over-simplifying what may be a complex problem, let us reduce the problem of radio diction to its basic element. Two types of diction with which all actors are acquainted are those employed on the stage and in everyday conversation. Stage diction is designed to carry across the footlights, back into the rear of the auditorium. Conversational diction is designed to reach a certain person in the same room who is influenced by sight, proximity, and familiarity, as well as by what is said. Neither of these is suitable for radio. Stage diction sounds stilted and artificial. Conversational diction lacks the dramatic impact which is needed. Stage diction sounds unnatural. Conversational diction sounds uninteresting.

The radio actor must, therefore, select the point in between these two poles which best communicates with dramatic impact yet retains the feeling of naturalness which goes with the intimacy of the medium. Finding this inbetween point, and adapting it to the particular Perspective desired, is the solution to the problem.

DIALECTS

DIALECTS ARE best expressed in terms of pronunciation, enunciation, inflectional patterns, and patterns of stress. When dialects are used (except for comic purposes) the actor attempts to get across the flavor of the dialect—not necessarily sound as if he had just stepped off the boat. If he flavors his speeches too strongly, it is likely that the dialect will call attention to itself, thus destroying its own effectiveness.

Most actors who specialize in certain dialects stress the necessity for learning by associating with persons who are native to the particular region or country. This is probably the best way to learn to speak an authentic dialect. In large communities it is generally an easy matter for the student to find centers of foreign culture. When this is impossible, dialect records are often helpful.

DISTORTION

MUCH THOUGHT and effort has gone into the perfection of methods and devices which distort sound. Why distort? These are two primary reasons: to achieve special effects, and/or to enhance by change the spirit or mood of a show.

The use of the term "special effects" may be misleading. In reality what is being attempted is the achievement of natural effects by special means. For instance, special means must be used to make the other voice on the telephone sound like it does when we actually hear a person on the other end of the line. Then too, everyone knows that when a person speaks in a cavern or empty auditorium, the voice naturally "booms" a little. To achieve these and other effects of naturalness, special means must be used, and thus the establishment of the somewhat anomalous term "special effects."

Distortion is sometimes used as a really "special" effect in order to achieve or enhance a desired spirit or mood in the show. This may range from the distortion of the "voice of conscience" in a simple psychological melodrama through a delightful fairy sequence in a fantasy to a stylized mélange in an expressionistic drama. The more common methods of achieving distortion are: the use of filters,

echo chambers, dead booths, gobos, mike positions, or a combination. These devices are in use both in network and non-network stations, and the actor should be familiar with their use.

A *filter* is an electronic mechanism which takes out or subtracts certain frequencies of the sound fed into it. There is no amplification. It follows, therefore, that the amount of sound coming out of the filter will be less than that which goes into it. Filter mikes should be worked close, and because it is usually the lows which are cut off, certain high frequency sounds may be emphasized if the actor is not careful. Usually that portion of the program which is to be filtered should be localized, and care must be taken to prevent cross-pickup. For that reason, a unidirectional mike is desirable. The RCA 77-B, or C or D (set on cardioid), the W. E. 639A or B (set on cardioid) or the Shure 556 are excellent mikes to use in connection with a filter. In any of these, the actor may speak directly into the mike at close range, provided he has good control of plosives, sibilants, and fricatives, and mouth noises. If these are prominent, they may be reduced by working at a slight angle, across mike. If it is necessary to use one of the full ribbon mikes (RCA 44-BX, 74-B, or KB-2C) as a filter mike, the actor must always work cross mike, and because these mikes attenuate the high frequencies at close range, a better effect is sometimes obtained if the pitch of the voice is raised slightly. A slight aspirate voice quality sometimes adds to the effect.

An *echo chamber* is a device or method for adding resonance and reverberation to the sound which is fed into it. The input of a studio microphone is fed to a loud speaker in the echo chamber, which is in turn picked up by another microphone in the echo chamber and sent back to the control panel. There are several types of echo chambers (including an electronic device which gives an effect similar to the mechanical one described above), but the actor's chief question is to the amount of reverberation which is to be added. In a large, empty, live auditorium, one must speak a little more slowly to allow the reverberation to die down a little. Otherwise the listener hears a confused jumble of words. In a smaller auditorium a person could speak more rapidly. If, therefore, a great amount of reverberation is to be added, the actor must slow down

his rate a little and articulate distinctly. If little echo is used, a more normal speed and enunciation may be used.

In smaller stations a microphone may be placed near the sounding board inside a piano to simulate an echo chamber. The actor sticks his head, as best he can, inside the piano. Because of the harmonic distortion of the voice, provided by the sympathetic vibrations of the various strings, the actor must take care to keep his volume and projection constant after it is set; for, unlike the mechanical echo whose volume is controlled by the engineer and whose reverberatory pattern has been pre-set by the director, the piano mike echo is controlled by the actor. A change in voice volume will change the quality of the echo. Extremely articulate speech is required when the piano echo is used.

A *dead booth* is an insulated box which has a reverberation time of close to zero. There is room in it for just one or two actors and a microphone. The inside of the box is covered with felt padding or other sound absorbent material. Since there is little reverberation and the resonant frequency of the enclosure too small for effect, the resultant voice sounds dull and lifeless. Though certain effects may be achieved by speaking off the beam of mike, for most purposes the desired effect may be achieved in a dead booth by speaking directly into the beam of the mike, at a medium range.

Gobos are acoustical screens which are covered on one side by sound absorbent material, and on the other by a hard reflecting surface. These acoustical screens may be fashioned into dead booths or telephone booths; may be used to shield a particular mike or to reflect sound into another one. They are more often used to direct sound rather than distort it. But because any focusing is, in effect, a kind of distortion, we speak of them here. No special instructions for the actor can be given, for each use is a little different.

As will be later shown, some distortion may occur in different microphone positions.

STUDIO SETUPS

THE ACTOR has very little to say about the way the various sound components (voice, music, and sound) are placed in the studio. This

is the job of the director and to some extent the engineer. He should know, in general, that each of the groups has a prescribed area, and that each should stay in his own area. Each group has its own set of microphones (in a show employing live music), and the microphones are so arranged that there is a minimum of cross-pickup—when they are properly used. If each segment will play to its own mike, the program quality will be better.

STUDIO SIGN LANGUAGE

THE TALKBACK SYSTEM in use in most modern studios permits easy communication between the control room and the studios while rehearsals are in progress. Naturally though, while the show is being broadcast, there must be another method of communication. A very simple system of hand signals has been devised which takes care of most of those little things which come up during broadcast (or dress rehearsal, when the director doesn't want to interrupt the rehearsal). The signals described below have been fairly well standardized and are used in the described manner by most directors. However, some directors have particular signals of their own making. If the director uses one in rehearsal with which he (the actor) is not familiar, he should be sure to find out what it means before performance. On many of them (especially the action signals: cue, speedup, etc.), the manner in which they are given indicates the degree of desired response. If the director is burning up the air in the control room while making a speedup signal, the timing must be pretty badly off, and every performer should speed up as much as possible. If the movement is slow, the probability is that only a few seconds are involved, and a slight speedup will do the trick.

These signals are designed for the simple directions. When complex directions must be given during the broadcast, the director generally writes a note. The following signals are of particular interest to the radio actor. Other signals, which are used between the director and the sound and music crews may be obtained by the interested person from any good text on radio production.

Level. (Give me a level.) Hand open, palm down, moved from side to side. Given by the director to member of cast or crew indicating

that a particular portion of the program (generally the opening sequence) should be gone over to give the engineer an opportunity to set the right volume. When given in studio, the person is asking the director, "Do you want a level?"

Stand by. Arm upraised, palm open, toward studio. At the beginning of the show it means "stand by to go on the air." During the show it is directed at a particular person or group and means "get ready to do what is called for." It is nearly always followed by a direct cue, a volume signal, or a cut signal.

Go ahead. (Direct cue.) Index finger pointed at and moved toward a particular person or group. Usually preceded by a stand by signal, which allows cast or crew member a few seconds warning.

Move closer to microphone. Hand, palm inward, brought toward mouth. May also be given by waving person toward mike.

Move back from microphone. Hand, palm outward, moved away from mouth. May also be given by waving person away from mike.

Speak more directly into the beam of the mike. Hand, palm open, fingers up, held in front of and perpendicular to mouth and moved forward and back.

Go faster. With index finger outstretched, the arm moves in a circular pattern. The imaginary circle is drawn perpendicularly to the plane between the director and the actor. The director may point to a particular person and tell him to go faster, or give the signal for the whole cast.

Go slower. Using both hands, the director stretches out an imaginary piece of taffy. Like the above signal, the director may intend it for only one cast member (in which event he points to him before giving the stretch signal), or he may intend it for the whole group.

Timing is O.K. (On the nose.) Director places the tip of his index finger on the tip of his nose. This signal, given at an interval after a speedup or slowdown signal indicates that the show is back on scheduled time and that the actors may then proceed at the previously rehearsed rate.

Use more volume. One or both hands raised, palms up. To the actor this would mean "speak more loudly."

Use less volume. One or both hands lowered, palms down. To the actor this means "speak more softly."

Use more intensity of feeling. With hands outstretched and fingers curved, palms up, the director uses a "pulling motion."

Use less intensity of feeling. Hand outstretched, palm down, a kind of patting motion as if soothing a crying child.

Watch me for cue or watch me more closely. Director points to his eye with index finger.

Everything is fine (O.K.). Thumb and index finger touching to make circle, other fingers outstretched.

Cut. Index finger drawn over throat. During the air show it is directed toward a specific person or group. A general cut signal, meaning "Everyone stop," would be given only if the program went off the air.

How does it sound? Given from a person in the studio to one in control. Points to ear with index finger.

Play it all. Clapsed hands, as a child prays. Do not use the optional or emergency cuts in the script.

PRELIMINARY CHECK OF SCRIPT

WHEN THE ACTOR receives the script, there are some mechanical details to which he should attend in addition to the study and analysis which has been previously mentioned.

The script should be checked for typographical errors and any found corrected. Any apparent mistakes should be noted so that the director can be consulted immediately before the rehearsal period concerning them. Any words of which the actor is in doubt should be checked for pronunciation. Preliminary accents and stresses should be marked in. Line motivations should be noted. On the matter of marking the assigned speeches so that they stand out and are well defined, there are a number of ways of doing it. Whichever method makes it easier to follow the script should be used. Some actors underline the name of the character, some underline the whole speech, some encircle the speech, etc. It makes no difference which way it is done just so long as the method is effective. Warning signs should be placed at the bottom of the page if a speech is

continued at the top of the next page or if the first speech of the next page is that of your particular character.

In *all* script markings a soft lead pencil should be used. Hard pencils make such light marks that they are difficult to read. Hard, sharp points may tear the paper. Ink is easy to read, but cannot be erased if the line or direction is changed or the marked-out speech is reinserted. Two or three soft lead pencils are standard equipment for the radio actor—both at study and in rehearsal.

LEVELS AND BALANCES

ONE OF THE director's trickiest problems, and one in which the informed actor may be of inestimable help, is the setting and maintaining of proper levels and balances. The problem of defining the word "level" in simple terms is most difficult. Yet, because the understanding of it is of such importance to the finished radio actor or director, such description must be attempted.

Level is a combination of the volume of a particular sound as heard by the ear and that volume of the same sound which is electrically generated in the microphone. Peculiarly enough, it does not always follow that the sound which generates the most electricity sounds the loudest to the human ear. For example, a very deep organ tone may not, to the listener, sound as loud as a baby's cry, yet to the engineer, the organ tone may generate much more electricity, thus having an "electrical volume" far above that of the baby's cry. The director must think both of the reaction of the ear and the reaction of the electronic machinery he is using. Supposing that these two sounds were being used (a curious combination, to be sure), the director's job is to blend them so that the levels would be approximately the same—provided such was the effect desired. This blending of levels is called "balance."²

There is generally an optimum mike position for each of the actors in a scene. This optimum position is the one which allows the actors' voices to be balanced both from the point of view of the response of the ear (mechanically) and from the point of view of the elec-

² For a more detailed and technical explanation of the relation between volume and loudness, see Appendix A.

tronic system (electrically). By the same token, at this optimum position there is an optimum volume range, optimum pitch range, and optimum voice quality for each actor, which permits his speeches to be balanced with those of the other actors, and with any sound or music incidental to the scene. Balance may therefore be achieved (or changed) in the studio by one of four ways—change in (1) mike position, (2) volume, (3) pitch, or (4) quality—singly or in combination. In the control room the engineer can assist in balance only by use of attenuators.³ The actors, therefore, are the primary persons who achieve and maintain (with the advice of the director) the balance of the show.

Achieving and maintaining the proper levels and balances is of importance not only aesthetically or artistically, but also from a practical point of view. Creating the proper Perspective, one of the most important considerations in radio drama, is directly dependent on balance and level, as are also the ability to put across movement and play the mike for the proper emotional appeal.

The feeling for the proper level, the automatic balancing with other members of the cast—these can be learned only by experience. The radio actor who recognizes and understands the problems involved in levels and balances can, however, recall and evaluate his own performances by the playbacks, and in time achieve that delicate sensibility which will add to the quality of his work.

BASIC MICROPHONE TECHNIQUES

IT HAS BEEN often and truly said that a good actor can and should be able to act in any medium. But though most of the basic principles of acting are the same in each medium, the techniques required to communicate the character are often quite different, and the physical nature of each of the four great dramatic media is quite different.

Thus it seems quite foolish for any actor, no matter how well versed he is in his own medium, to expect that he can step easily from that medium to another without training in, and observation

³ Attenuator is the technical name of the volume controls attached to the input lines of each of the microphones. They are also variously called faders, gains, and pots (short for "potentiometers").

of, the techniques involved. A good stage actor generally does extremely well on the air, but only after he has mastered the techniques of radio acting—as more than a few stage stars have found to their embarrassment.

One more word—a person may be an exceptionally effective radio actor or learn to become one without having much knowledge of the nature of sound, or the equipment of broadcasting. Nine times out of ten, however, the good actor becomes better when he understands the nature of the medium and the tools with which he works. The reader can better understand and use the material in this section if he is familiar with the principles of sound and microphone operation which are given in Appendix A.

Mike position. The actor's placement in relation to the microphone is called "mike position." This position, as has been before stated, has a direct bearing on the levels and balances. The movement of an actor only a few inches, one way or another, may change the Perspective of the whole scene.

The importance of position is quite graphically illustrated by the relationship between distance (from the mike) and volume. Let us suppose that in a condition of free space an actor speaking with a normal volume steps back to double his original distance from the mike. In order to be heard at the same volume (the mike not being turned up any), he would have to speak three times as loudly. Because of the others in the scene, the engineer cannot change the volume input of the microphone just because one actor chooses to stray out of position. It may easily be seen that once a position has been assigned by the director, the actor should stay thereabouts. The actor should mark on his script the position for each scene (or even in some cases, a particular line) so that the director need not disrupt rehearsal for the purpose of repeating an instruction. But because an actor has been assigned a position, it does not follow that he must there root himself. He shares the microphone with the others, stepping back out of the way when he has left the scene of action, and coming back in for his own lines. Movement about the mike will be discussed in a moment.

Unless a particular effect is desired, the most effective work is

done when the actor speaks directly into the mike. This is especially true when a ribbon-velocity mike is being used. The sound then strikes the ribbon at a 90 degree angle, producing maximum clarity of reproduction. When a person speaks off the beam of the mike, the direct power of the sound is dissipated as it is absorbed or reflected on the various surrounding surfaces, before it bounces back into the mike. It is not really so sure a shot to bank a billiard ball three or four times before it goes toward the desired pocket. Much better to shoot it straight at the pocket. To use the same analogy: if, however, there is so much power behind your stroke that you are afraid the ball will jump out of the pocket if shot directly in, it is then best to dissipate some of the energy by banking it first. And so, in calling or shouting, the actor turns his head and deliberately projects off the beam.

When it is necessary to play close to the mike for intimate scenes, confidential remarks, whispers, asides, etc., it is generally better to work across the mike. On the cross-mike position the path of direct sound is parallel to the ribbon, not perpendicular to it as in on beam work. In cross-mike work, the actor speaks *across the face* of the mike, not into the side of the mike.

Using the script. One of the most common faults in holding the script is that of holding it down waist high. When the actor holds his script in that position he must, in order to read it, bend his head down. When he does this, two things happen simultaneously. First, he is off the direct beam of the mike; and second, he so compresses his vocal chords that what sound does get to the mike sounds as if it has first gone through a wringer. The proper method of holding the script is to hold it up at face level, on the dead side of the mike, thus keeping it from between the mouth and the ribbon or other microphonic element. When you do this, you are automatically on beam, your voice box has plenty of room, your head and throat muscles are in normal, relaxed positions, there is little likelihood of script noises being picked up, and it is much easier to develop a sense of lively communication with the actor on the opposite side of the mike. In this position you can, with a flick of your eyes, glance at the director in the control room or establish eye contact

with other members of the cast and crew. All this, just by holding your script up in the proper place!

You know, of course, that the rattle of the pages of your script is magnified when it comes over the mike. Be extremely careful about having dog-eared your script in rehearsal. The more the pages are curled from having been folded in a pocket or stuffed in a handbag, the more likely they are to rattle. In changing the pages, slide the top page down, thus revealing the top of the next page, then quietly and firmly slide it off and put it on the back. It can and should be done quickly and noiselessly. Don't drop used pages on the floor. Some unwary actor will crumple one with his foot and turn a tender love scene into a farce. And don't touch the mike with your script. As a matter of fact, don't touch the mike—or the mike stand.

When the script is given to the actor, it is usually stapled. It is generally best to leave it stapled until rehearsal time so that there will be no loss of pages. Most directors, however, prefer that scripts be unstapled when rehearsals start, for on mike it is extremely difficult to turn stapled pages without noise. In the stress and strain of rehearsal, however, it is very easy to mislay a page or two of script. As one can well imagine, this could be catastrophic if it occurred at the last minute. It is embarrassing any time. By taking along a paper clip in your pocket or bag, you can easily and quickly keep your script together and in proper paginal order during breaks. A word of caution: be sure your name is on your script, and when you lay it down (properly clipped), lay it down in the same place each time, so that you will be spared the embarrassment of asking others if they have seen it and holding up rehearsal until it is found. Many professional actors do not let their scripts out of their hands from the beginning of the table rehearsal until the end of the show.

Talking over the microphone. Speech is the projection of thoughts and ideas and feelings and emotions to another person by means of words. Because we have different degrees of feelings and ideas, we express our thoughts and emotions with different degrees of emphasis. To illustrate this degree of projection, let us listen in on a lady who, over the telephone, is discussing with a neighbor plans for a club tea. Through an open window, she sees her young son balanc-

ing precariously on the side fence. She calls to him to get down. The milkman comes into the kitchen; she calls to the maid. No answer. She calls to the milkman to put the milk in the ice box and continues her telephone conversation. The maid sticks her head in. "Wuz you callin' me?" "Yes, where have you been?" "Upstairs." "Oh, well, next time please come quicker." A few more words to the neighbor, then the little boy comes in with a skinned knee. Mother stops to kiss it well and murmurs a few words of consolation. And so on.

In each of these situations the woman is projecting differently. If this were a scene on the air—and stranger things have happened—each of these side conversations would be projected differently. Though most of the picture would come through by the actress' visualization, the "clincher" would be her correct projection to the microphone.

Breath control is an extremely important aspect of proper reading on mike. It is, of course, important in any type of oral communication. Because, however, the mike is so close, any sharp intake of air will be instantly picked up and amplified all out of proportion. In involved speeches or long complex sentences it is a good idea to mark the places where the supply of breath may be replenished. A person shouldn't wait until he is out of air, then cough and splutter and gasp until he can get more. On the little natural pauses, take a little breath. Between $1/3$ and $2/3$ full is a good operating range. By keeping the proper "air level," it is much easier to articulate correctly. There is not the feeling of pressure that comes with full lungs, nor the feeling of tension which comes with empty ones.

Because the microphone is so sensitive, mouth noises must be taken into consideration. The little clicks and clucks which are unnoticeable even in ordinary face-to-face conversation may noticeably detract from a scene played on mike. The necessity for clarity of articulation and enunciation makes the problem even more pronounced, for especially in the labials and modified plosive sounds, is there the tendency toward pronounced mouth noises. The actor who is plagued by this difficulty must practice (preferably with a wire or tape recorder) until they no longer exist. A primary cause of rectifiable mouth noises is an oversupply of saliva in the mouth and

tension in the throat, jaw, and tongue muscles. Practice in keeping the excess saliva drained off and relaxation of the muscles mentioned will generally do away with mouth noises.

The ribbon element of a microphone is a very delicate apparatus. It is designed to work on the velocity principle, which is, to repeat, the velocity of sound waves *past* the ribbon, rather than the pressure of sound wave *on* the ribbon. If the sound is too great in volume or if it is accompanied by intense and sudden currents of air, the effect is that the pressure on the ribbon is the greater force, and thus the mike is being forced to act as a pressure mike, a response that is foreign to it. The sound which comes out of the speaker when this occurs is foreign also. This is called "blasting," and in addition to sound distortion because of over-modulation, there is real danger of injury to the ribbon. This is one reason why one never blows into a mike to test it.

A modified form of blasting, one which is annoying rather than harmful, is caused by certain consonants, notably plosives and fricatives. When any consonant is spoken, the air is momentarily bottled up, and when released, it momentarily rushes out before the pressure is back to normal. To illustrate this, hold a lighted match in front of your mouth. Then say the letter "P." The flame visibly wavers, probably is puffed out. If this were the ribbon of a microphone, the effect would be the same, and the listener would hear, coming out of the loudspeaker, a popping thud. "B," "P," "F," and "S" are the worst offenders.

If the mike position is from two to three feet, there will be very little if any fricative, sibilant, or plosive blasting. Often, however, the actor, in order to obtain the desired perspective, must work twelve or fifteen inches from the mike—perhaps even closer. When this is the case, it is advisable to work slightly cross mike so that the little explosions of air strike the ribbon at an angle, rather than directly. On very intimate scenes where a distance of three or four inches is imperative, straight cross-mike technique is indicated. It is the rare actor who can keep from popping the mike at that short distance when working directly on beam.

The student who finds that in normal mike position he has trouble

with fricatives and plosives will do well to practice getting rid of the trouble, which otherwise may become so ingrained that it will be difficult to eradicate. Progress may be checked by use of a lighted match or candle in front of the mouth. Other consonants should not be neglected, but when he can, holding the candle about eight inches from his mouth, recite the whole of "Peter Piper Picked" with the proper feeling and still have a lighted candle at the end of the recitation, he will be on the right and proper road.

Emphasis is a most important effect in dramatic reading in any medium. It is, perhaps, a little more important on the air because of the heightened, or more melodramatic, aspect of much radio drama. All of the methods of emphasis—pause, volume, inflection, intensity, diction, pace, rhythm, rate, and accent—are effective on the air. All, save one, are easily used. This one is volume; the reason for which has been given. Of the common means of emphasis, the one most closely related to volume is intensity. Let us illustrate.

A small stream of water is coming from a faucet. A certain amount or volume is coming from the faucet in a designated period. Now we place our thumb tightly over the mouth of the faucet so that no water escapes. We feel the pressure build up until at last a very small stream (smaller than the original) forces its way out and spurts two or three feet. The volume of the spurt is the same as that of the original stream, but it has the energy behind it which has built up. In order to get that much apparent energy, we would have to turn up the original stream many fold.

Translating this illustration now into volume and intensity, we see that in order for the volume to have the effect of the intensity, it would have to be many times greater. If, because of the physical limitations of our equipment, we cannot get it that high, then we can achieve the same effect by use of intensity. As a matter of fact, we often achieve more, for the feeling of pressure, bottled up and straining to be unleashed, is easily transmitted. The listener feels this pressure, waiting tensely for it to burst through, much as he would wait tensely for the balloon, being blown beyond its normal capacity, to burst.

This is not to hold that intensity should always be substituted

for volume. In its place, volume is a most effective method of achieving emphasis. When, however, the effect desired is more than can be reached by volume, intensity may be used to best advantage.

Movement in relation to the microphone. Except in isolated instances, the microphone remains stationary, and yet action and movement must be gotten across to the listener. The illusion of movement is made by moving the sound source, not the microphone. If, for instance, we are with a young mother hurrying toward a group of fighting boys, the crowd noise grows louder as she approaches them. That is the illusion. Actually, the mother is standing still, and the boys in the crowd approach the microphone. This is but one example. Movement in relation to the mike falls into three general groups: Fades (on and off), casual movement, and playing the mike.

Fades are used in four ways: (1) when there is the illusion of the source of sound coming toward the playing area (such as a person making an entrance), (2) when the source of sound goes away from the playing area (an exit), (3) when the playing area moves toward the source of sound (as in above example of the young mother and the fighting boys), and (4) when the playing area moves away from the source of sound (the opposite). The degree of fading is expressed as: quick fades, normal fades, and extended or slow fades. A live fade (or studio fade) is one performed by a person or group in the studio. A board fade is accomplished by the engineer in the control room.

Fades in entrances and exits are a dramatic convention of radio. In actual life, a person entering a normal-sized room and speaking from the doorway does not sound as if he is fifty feet away. And as he comes toward you, there is little noticeable change in the volume of his voice. On the air, there is a very noticeable change in volume. The reason for this is to project to the audience the picture of a person entering or leaving. There must be action. On the basis that the radio audience is now accustomed to this dramatic convention, there has recently been an attempt to make such fades more nearly lifelike.

What actually happens when a person enters the room and greets us? At the door he says, "Hello there." Starts across room. "Just heard you were in town." By now he is a half dozen feet away. "Surely good to see you again." By the end of this speech we are shaking hands. As he enters the room, the stimulus of seeing us after a long period of time affects him so that he unconsciously raises his voice both in pitch and volume. As he approaches us, it drops in volume and pitch to more nearly normal, and a genuine warmth of feeling is apparent. As we shake hands, the volume and pitch are normal.

Now that the convention of the fade has firmly established the picture of entrances and exists, it is quite logical to make them more nearly true to life, thus adding dimension to them. Speaking toward the mike at about an 80 degree off-mike position, using less volume and more projection, the actor makes the first speech "Hello there." As he starts the second line, he slowly moves into the center of the beam and advances a foot or so toward the mike, lessening his projection and increasing his volume a little. On the third line he is on mike and the illusion is complete. We have had a little fading on—just enough to paint the picture—and the volume, projection, and microphone perspective have been perfectly natural. As a result, the listener has a feeling of reality. This is but one example, but its principles may be applied to many practices.

Casual movement must be motivated to be effective. It does little good merely to flicker the volume in the listener's ear. On the other hand it also does little good to engage in action-loaded dialogue without a trace of action in the way the voices sound. Playing the microphone adds to the reality of the dialogue. In this, the actor makes slight changes in mike position and mike perspective to achieve an expression of external action and emotions.

Mike perspective. The combination of those factors which make up the relationship of the actor and the microphone is called microphone perspective. In addition to the mechanical elements of levels and balances, microphone position, and the characteristics of sound: volume, loudness, pitch, quality, and rate, there are the factors of the acoustical perspective of the scene, the intensity and action

involved, and the desired mental, physical, and emotional Perspectives.

Each of these affects the actor's approach to the mechanics of mike technique, which is the basis for the communication of his art. Without communication, there can be no art. Without technique, there can be little communication.

Rehearsal and performance details

IN THE PRECEDING chapters many details of rehearsal and performance have been pointed out as they related to the functions of preliminary work, visualization of the characters, and projecting action. We come now to a consideration of those other elements and techniques which form a part of the actual process of performances in rehearsal and during the broadcast.

USING THE SCRIPT

The give and take of dialogue. One of the primary faults in the performance of student and amateur actors is that many do not understand that dialogue is a "give and take" proposition. The student often has a tendency to think only of those speeches which are his own. He reads his speech, mentally steps back and waits for his cue, then once again animated, steps in for his next speech. This is obviously the wrong approach. Dialogue is a two, or three, or four way conversation; what the other person is saying is equally as important as your own part of the conversation. If such were not the case, there would be a monologue at that point, rather than a dialogue. Reading *in vacuo* is a particularly unfortunate habit to get into, for how can the listener be expected to follow the story when the actor himself is not doing it?

Reading vs. talking. One of radio's advantages is that the actor does not have to memorize his lines. However, this advantage im-

poses upon the actors the obligation of reading as if speaking. If the "illusion of the first time" is to be maintained, if the listener is to be interested in what is actually happening, the actors must realize that the script represents people talking to each other—not reading to each other. The secret of apparent spontaneity lies in the old adage "Art conceals art." It is necessary to inquire deeply into the motivations and the reactions of the character in order to figure out just how certain passages may be emphasized, certain moods created, certain exposition most effectively gotten across to the listener, certain logic and progression presented, and certain emotion effectively communicated. When the method which most effectively presents these various facets of play and character has been decided upon, the actor then uses art to conceal the art. He talks and acts (action) as if the play really were happening, making the show go so smoothly that the listener is absolutely unaware of the use of scripts.

It would be a mistake to assume that the professional radio actor uses the script as a crutch. As a matter of fact he works from it. He is so familiar with his lines, and those of the other characters also, that he need not keep his eyes glued to the script at all times. He can thus keep an eye cocked in the direction of the control room, and also establish visual contact with the actor playing opposite him. By not being absolutely dependent upon the script for every word, he is able to project himself much more into the character.

Variety and contrast. Spontaneity is the sparkle which gives dramatic life to the lines. But the over-all principles of variety and contrast must receive serious attention in order to enhance the sparkle. With a definite pattern of climaxes, changes in scene and action, changes in emotional pattern, and other methods, the playwright tries to anticipate the attention cycles of his primary audiences. The director interprets these, establishes an over-all rhythm to the play, and by means of heightening the dialogue, music, and sound, paces the play so as to provide for a maximum of audience attention.

The actor is a vital part of these over-all attempts by the play-

wright and the director. He must understand just what they are striving to achieve; for the efforts of both of them can succeed or be nullified by the actor himself, because it is within the scenes and even within the speeches themselves that significant changes take place. These changes must be motivated, to be sure; variety for the sake of variety is an artificial device which should be shunned because it tends to call attention to itself. Not often will the listener who feels that he is being tricked continue to listen to a program.

Emphasis. Most of the lines in a play are carried on in a "normally dramatic" atmosphere. It is assumed that there will be a certain amount of variety and contrast in the lines, that new or important ideas will be more prominently displayed, and that previously mentioned or less important ideas will be somewhat subordinated. There is no clear line of demarcation between the normally dramatic and a condition of emphasis; but somewhere along the scale dialogue ceases to be "normal," and becomes "emphatic." We may say, in general, that emphasis occurs when there is a special reason for calling attention to something or somebody.

There are many methods of vocal emphasis. Chief among them are: pause, volume, inflection, intensity, diction, pace, timing, rhythm, rate, and accent. These may be used singly or in combination to provide just the right amount of emphasis; in just the right mood or spirit of the characters, situation, and lines, in order to project the desired picture or feeling or idea.

Topping lines. Topping means literally "to come in on top" of the previous line in the dialogue. This device, used for emphasis, is generally used to build effectively to a minor climax. When the actor tops a line, he may use any one of the means for emphasis (mentioned above), or he may use two or more in combination. Ordinarily there is a short series of speeches in a scene using "toppers," and though the pattern of emphasis may vary within the scene, the effect is that of a definite build. Occasionally, a single speech or two within a scene are toppers, in which case the desired effect is generally that of expressing a quick or definite reaction—for effect, perhaps—then proceeding with the rest of the scene. Topping generally increases the emotional expression of the scene,

and this emotion itself acts as an increasing motivation for the lines. We saw an excellent example of topping in the dialogue between Joey and his father in *The Test*.

Throwaway lines. Those minor lines which add naturalness to the scene and which form a part of normal conversation are called throwaway lines. Their *raison d'être* is to make true to life the characters and their actions. They make the character more believable and the scene and dialogue more natural. They are factors that, used judiciously, motivate such incidental business as makes for credulity—sitting down, getting up, reaching for a cigarette, etc. An almost extravagant use of throwaways is found in the restaurant scene in *My Uncle Willy*. See page 295.

Underplaying. Underplaying, or effective dramatic heightening of the lines by playing them at less than the expected volume or intensity, is generally a bit difficult to get across in radio. The things which make underplaying an effective device in a visual medium—where a lifted eyebrow and a little twist of the head might precede a devastating “Oh?”—are often extremely difficult to project on the air. However, an exceptional actor or actress discreetly using the technique of underplaying on the air may score a tremendously effective performance. Though this method of playing is admittedly difficult, it is not impossible. It should, however, be used by the student with caution, for to the average listener there is a very fine line of demarcation between an underplayed scene or character and a dull and uninteresting one. For scenes where underplaying can be used to advantage see pages 336, 346, and 351.

“Tromping” on lines. This ungrammatical but highly descriptive term highlights the common fault of many young actors of speaking without thinking. In even the fastest conversations, there is the necessity to understand what the other person is saying. The actor who, without reflection, reads his line the split second after his cue is given by the other actor, who is so vitally afraid of a half-second's pause, is certainly detracting from the illusion of the play. That brilliant and witty dialogue of the stage (Oscar Wilde and Noel Coward for example) which is bandied about on the boards with the same speed as a ping-pong ball, is seldom effective on the

air when the speed is held the same. The air audience must have time to understand the implied reaction, and to absorb it. This kind of polished dialogue may be presented much more effectively by use of innuendo rather than by speed. And it cannot, of course, be presented at all when there is a continual "tromping" on lines.

Unconscious imitation of fellow actor. Another ruinous habit of a great many beginning radio actors is that of unconsciously and gradually sliding into the same pitch, rate, and inflectional patterns as those of the actors playing opposite them. The result of this is an increased difficulty on the part of the listeners to understand who is talking. Sometimes it gets so bad that even to a trained listener the effect is of one person answering his own questions, or making comments on his own speeches. The playwright has tried for contrast in characterizations and the director has cast contrasting voices so that the listener can easily follow the dialogue. These efforts should not be nullified by the actor. The actor must always be watchful of any tendency on his part to fall into the rate, tonal, or inflectional pattern of the actor playing opposite him.

THE CHARACTER ON MIKE

Setting and holding character. The characterization, which at the beginning is flexible, is set in rehearsal. Just where in the rehearsal series this crystallization takes place varies with different shows and directors. Certainly after the integration rehearsal there should be no doubt in the actor's mind, for it is during the integration and spotting that final timings are begun (not necessarily set), sound and music and voices are blended together, and rhythm and pacing take form. It may be readily seen that levels and balances not only between the actors but also between the other components of sound and music could be disrupted by a definitive character change, with an attendant change in mike and audience perspective. For that reason there should be close adherence to the set characterization at least during dress and air.

Rehearsal notes. During the rehearsal the director will give you certain directions on characterization, cues, and line readings which you will note on your script. There are other details of production

and performance which are valuable to remember. When there is an overlapping of music or sound and dialogue, you may note this for your own information. If there are any specific questions concerning your speeches or your relationship with other characters, note the place and ask the director after the rehearsal. Note those places you have given an inadequate reading so that you will be forewarned next time. Again let us repeat: use a soft lead pencil with an eraser, not ink, not hard lead. Don't trust your memory. Scripts are made to be used, to be written on. The actor who has several unmarked sheets on his script at the end of the air show is quite likely the one who has "fluffed" the most. However, a small word of warning. One can have so many marks on his script that they become confusing, rather than helpful. Use just the right amount for proper and complete guidance—no more, no less.

Very definite perspective markings should be made on those speeches in which the microphone perspective is off the norm, or where there is a change in audience Perspective. The different notations an actor might write down to remind himself take many forms. To give a general idea, some of the most common ones are: off (off mike), on (on mike), back, close, fading on, fading off, slow fade on, quick fade off, medium fade off, watch for quick cue, slow cue here, fast, slower, I really mean this, don't be so stuffy, Give!, take it easy here, and so forth. These are, incidentally, some of the more printable items taken from an actual script. There were one or two others which, though not in printable state, served to give the actor the needed impetus. This raises the point that an actor should be prudent in writing his directions. One young man who was playing the part of a circumspect juvenile had written in a strong reminder to himself—too strong. In the heat of performance he said very plainly, "Well, I'll be damned!" rather than "Well, I'll be darned!" As soon as he said it, he realized what he had done, and becoming confused, he missed his next cue. This happened on a student show, and he got a chance to redeem himself. The ending could have been less happy were a sponsor at stake.

Establishing the scene. The average half-hour radio drama may be unfolded in four or five different settings. In each of the scenes

which introduce a new locale a definite effort must be made to establish that locale in the minds of the listeners; and in succeeding scenes that illusion must be maintained.

One of the most powerful methods of approaching the problem of scene and locale projection is by the mental approach of the actors involved. This may sound simple, but, to many student actors, picturization is most difficult. The deterrents are many, chief among them being the lack of physical illusion such as is obtained in the other media by costumes, props, and sets. The radio actor, though never leaving the studio, must successfully transfer the listener's attention from an office to a bar to a boy's club to a busy street to an automobile interior to a church. Furthermore, by means of the magic of the transition, these transferences average about a quarter of a minute. Certainly it is most necessary that the actor be mentally able to bridge these dimensional crevasses and take his audience with him.

The radio actor, approaching the scene mentally, must be a split personality. One half of him is seated behind a desk making love to his secretary (or driving the car or walking down the street) and the other half is keenly aware of the mike perspective, the script, the director in control, the sound background—all those studio details of which he must necessarily be cognizant.

The physical facilities of the scene and locale may be projected in part by the mechanical and electronic devices of filters, echo chambers, use of gobos, etc., or they may be suggested by changes in microphone perspective. Slight changes in mike positions help to give the effect of a different locale, merely because of the change.

When, by means of experimentation, the actor has properly projected himself mentally into the locale; when mike positions and levels and balances have been set; when such sound devices as are being employed have been set; when, in other words, the locales are effectively prescribed, then the actor must make every effort to keep them so in successive rehearsals. This is one reason why he must carefully notate his script.

Adjustment to studio audience. In those dramatic performances which allow studio audiences the actor has an added burden. Un-

like the variety shows, which often have a rehearsal or two in front of the audience before the show goes on the air, the dramatic show is seldom, if ever, accorded this opportunity. The result is that the actors hit the audience cold, and unless they are mentally prepared for studio audience response, some find it very difficult to give their best performance. Perhaps the best advice to the young actor in this situation is to remember that the whole series of rehearsals has been directed toward producing a show aimed to the listener in his living room—not to the audience in the studio.

THE ACTOR'S RESPONSE TO CUES

THE WORD "cue" is generally used to cover the whole of studio sign language, though its more specific use is attached to the action signals, such as go-ahead, speed up, slow down, etc. The actor must realize not only what to do in response to the cue, but how to do it.

Cue origination. In most performances the actor receives the majority of the cues from the director. He may, however, receive some of them from the sound man, music man, engineer, studio production man (floor manager), or even from another actor. When the director is setting up the mechanics of the show, he designates those cues which are to be taken by the actor from a source other than himself.

Let us suppose that the scene is laid in the living room of a manufacturer whose workers are out on strike. After the beginning of the scene, there is a knock on the door, the man opens it, and is greeted by an assistant who has come to tell him that the strikers are in a rebellious mood. The assistant is in a hurry, for he has had word that the strikers are sending a large delegation to the house of the manufacturer. We hear the hurried knock on the door, the assistant's muffled voice, the opening of the door, and the assistant's first line on mike as soon as the door is opened. In this situation the director would probably tell the actor playing the role of the assistant to take the cue for his first on-mike line from the sound of the door opening. The lapse, short though it be, for the director's hearing the door open, giving a cue to the actor, and the actor's responding to

the cue, might very well destroy the desired illusion of haste and urgency.

Later in the same scene we hear a crowd of people beginning to assemble in front of the house. Their voices are indistinct and muffled, but there is no mistaking the tone. It is a surly and demanding crowd. The assistant has been urging the manufacturer to go out the back door and leave until the crowd cools off, but the latter will not hear of it. He is determined to stand his ground. The crowd is now becoming almost unmanageable, and we hear cries of, "Here comes the committee," "Let 'em get through, boys," and other comments indicative of the action taking place and temperament of the crowd. There is a knock on the door, firm and demanding. The manufacturer opens it, steps into the full view of the crowd. Jeering and catcalls greet him. The crowd is quieted by the leader of the delegation, who then turns to the manufacturer for his speech.

In this latter scene, it is quite obvious that a dramatic climax is in the offing, and that the spectacle and feeling of conflict which precede it are accentuated by the removal of the barrier between the two opposing forces. In other words—by the simple opening of the door. But here the director is the only one who can know the proper balance. The click of the door, which signifies the beginning of the open conflict, could not even be heard in the studio, with all the muttering of the crowd. Only by keeping control in his own hands could the director achieve the maximum effect. In this instance, he himself would give the cue to the crowd and leader.

These illustrate the different situations which may influence the director as to the origination of the cue. After an actor has played under a particular director once or twice he will know how the director prefers to handle the cues. Some directors are extremely loath to delegate any cues at all, preferring to keep the reins of the show very tightly in their own hands. Others delegate cues at the slightest opportunity. Probably the majority of directors adopt a middle course in which they delegate cues when the desired effect will be best served, and give the rest themselves.

Integration of dialogue with other sound elements. The integration of dialogue with sound or music (or both) can pose a problem

to the director and actor. If live music or sound is being used, the orchestra leader or the sound man tries to integrate with the actor. For instance, let us suppose that a mysterious theme is to sneak in under the last few lines of a scene, ending in a stinger at the precise moment the last word of the scene is spoken. The director will, before the rehearsal, time that portion of the scene (which has the music background) as he believes it will be read by the actors in the actual broadcast; then he gives this timing to the leader of the orchestra or to the arranger. The arranger will prepare or obtain suitable music which lasts the required time, but he will insert a small pad of a few seconds duration right before the stinger. If, in the actual broadcast, the actors read a little faster or slower, he can stretch or compress a little and hit the stinger at exactly the required moment. With live music the actor is not generally obligated to "hit the nail on the head," but he should come as close to it as possible.

In most student productions, live music is not available. This also holds true for a great many productions over local stations. Recorded music, is, of course, inflexible. The actor must realize that once that record is started there is no stopping it. If the director's beginning cue to the music man has been based on the time of the previous readings by the actors, then the actors must read exactly the same on the broadcast as they have done in rehearsals. If there is a controllable swell for a transition or conclusion a discrepancy of two or three seconds in the reading will make little difference; but very often there is in the music itself a natural build or swell or stinger upon which the director has predicated the successful communication of the emotion of the sequence. In that case, the actors must be able to read to the second.

A director may sometimes give a stopwatch to the actor or to another person in the cast or studio crew with instructions to start it on signal. The actors may very plainly see how they are getting along by glancing at the stopwatch and comparing its time with the internal scene timings they have marked on their own scripts. This procedure is not liked by directors, for it adds another element of possible fallibility to the show. But a particularly important effect

which would otherwise be impossible may sometimes be obtained in this manner. It therefore behooves the actor to be able to operate and read a stopwatch.

RESPONSE TO CUES

THE RESPONSE to the director's cues should be smooth and even, for if the response is hurried or jerky, the illusion may well be lost. There are few things quite so annoying as such abrupt effects—even though one occasionally hears them on the networks—as “Crowd *up* and *down*, music *in* and *out*,” or the obvious speed-up or slow-down of dialogue in the closing moments of the play. The execution should be smooth, and the actor is directly responsible for making it so. Exceptions are emergency or cut cues or a topping spoken stinger in the dialogue. The actor should note special instructions on his script, such as, for example, “Watch for quick cue,” “Don’t jump on this.”

ATTENTION TO DIRECTOR

THE ACTOR should have his script so marked that he is warned of upcoming action cues and pays particular attention to the director at those points, for there is nothing quite so frustrating to the director as to try to cue an actor who is “giving his all” in the opposite direction, or languidly gazing around the studio when the director is trying to get his attention.

Although the director generally tries to establish visual contact with the actor before he gives him a cue, he may not do so. It is the responsibility of the actor to get his cue when it is given, irregardless of what the director is looking at. Some directors are disconcertingly able to do three or four things at once. They must be so endowed to keep on top of a show employing so many diverse elements. Well—keep your eye on the director, especially when you have a cue coming up.

Keeping an eye on the director and having all cues marked as to where and how they should be taken reduces considerably the possibilities of a jumped cue (one in which the actor or crew member comes in too soon). A carefully rehearsed sequence can be utterly

spoiled by a jumped cue, which immediately shouts to the listener "This is play-acting and not a real happening!"

Remember that the director has only two hands with which to cue three basic elements and perhaps one or two in addition. For instance, a typical sequence might be cue to orchestra for cross-fade with crowd coming up (also cued), holding crowd, and cueing first line of speech. Even though the sight lines between the control room and each segment are clearly defined—something not always possible in smaller studios—the actor must know the succession of cues (cue sequence) and know which one is his. Otherwise he may come in at the wrong time and spoil the sequence. Some directors make it a practice to use one hand for sound and/or music, and the other for the actors. Even when this is done, the actors must be vigilant, for—oh speak softly!—directors have been known to make mistakes.

The floor director. On the larger and better heeled dramatic shows there is sometimes an assistant director, or floor director (or floor manager, studio manager, or studio director, as he is variously called). He is in the studio with the actors, or on stage if the show is being held in a theatre studio. One of his functions is to relay signals from the control room to the actors. The director can talk to him through an intercom phone, giving him directions which he can then pass on to the particular actors involved. It is he who will adjust your mike placement if you happen to stray, give you whispered directions about cuts, etc. He may also relay a cue to you from the director. In the smaller shows the director usually asks one person who is in the cast, or the announcer, to act as floor manager.

Speedups and slowdowns. A particular word in regard to speed-ups and slowdowns. The director will not often allow the timing to get too far off schedule. If, however, it is necessary to alter drastically the rate and tempo of the show, the pacing will obviously suffer unless the actors are careful to make the change within the phrasing pattern of the dialogue. By doing so, the change in speed will be less noticeable.

Slowing down the dialogue, either for timing or proper pacing, seems to be particularly difficult for student actors. There is no

necessity for filling up every one of the 1770 seconds that the average show is on the air. Pauses should be handled judiciously, to be sure, and anticipatory or expectant pauses should be filled. (In the trade they are called pregnant pauses.) But the actor should remember that the audience must have time not only to react to what is being said but also to keep straight the characters and the situation. Learning to slow down the rate, but at the same time keeping the proper pacing, keeping the character alive, and keeping the action clear, requires persistent self-critical effort upon the part of the actor.

WORKING WITH TIME

TIME FIGURED in minutes and *seconds* is an essential commodity of radio. Persons working in any of the fields of radio are successful only after they fully realize and accept this important concept. There is, I am sure, not one who does not occasionally moan of the "constricting coils of time," or "unbearable obeisance to that blankety-blank clock." This is only natural. But when it comes down to doing the show, the professional works *with* the time he has, not *against* it. He does not race to beat the deadline. He simply meets it.

Time is not the bugaboo in radio that the layman popularly supposes it to be. "How in the world you ever make it come out on time is beyond me!" Well, as a matter of fact, if the show didn't come out on time—that would be the surprising thing. For there are so many precautions taken to insure correct timing, and so many means for correcting errors that it really is rather surprising when we hear a show cut off because it runs overtime.

The use of cuts. Radio dramatic writers, like all playwrights, like to produce as "tight" a show as possible. But they realize that it is impossible for them to foresee all the problems that the director will come up against, and they generally incorporate in their plays a looser structure than is absolutely necessary. For instance, the assignment from the agency or production unit might be for a 23 minute script. The experienced writer will add a couple of minutes of dialogue just to be on the safe side. When the director receives

the script, he will read it through in the same manner in which he believes the actors will read. He times the dialogue, estimates as closely as possible the different bridges and transitions (sound and music), adds the standard or generally used time for the commercials, and the standard opening and closing. All of these factors are added together.

Let us suppose that the non-dramatic items (open and close, commercials, public service or institutional announcements, etc.) total six minutes. This leaves 23½ minutes for the dramatic portion. He figures 2½ minutes for opening, transitional, and curtain music, leaving 21 minutes for dialogue. When he times the dialogue portion of the script, he finds it to be about 25 minutes. He has, therefore, about 4 minutes of dialogue which he will probably have to cut. He makes preliminary cuts of two minutes. These cuts may be left in or taken out before the script is duplicated, according to the particular organizational practice. The better practice is to take them out before duplication. If they are taken out, he still has a twenty-three minute script in its final form. The director then selects various passages which may be deleted without injury to the dramatic values of the script. The least offensive cuts he labels as "probable," and the remainder as "possible." Some directors also select a possible cut near the end of the show which may be used in event of an emergency.

During the table rehearsal the director has timed the reading of the script. Though this timing will not be accurate, it can be strongly indicative. In this particular instance, the reading was 21 minutes, but it was obviously fast. The director feels safe in giving to the cast as permanent cuts those he had labeled to himself as probable. On the first mike rehearsal the dialogue ran 22 minutes (one minute over). The integration rehearsal time was 30:30 (22 minutes dialogue, 8½ minutes other elements). At the end of that rehearsal one additional minute of dialogue is cut. The dress rehearsal runs 29:40 and the director may decide to leave it there or cut an additional speech or two for insurance, for it is always better to have a little too little than a little too much. It is easier to stretch a show 10 seconds than to cram in 10 seconds more.

The necessity for making cuts in the script is made less onerous by the actor's understanding of the timing problems involved and by his unhesitant acceptance of the director's decision. That the actual mechanics of changing the script are most important, it goes without saying. All deletions and additions should be carefully noted on his script by every actor in the company. The cut on page three may affect the character who does not appear until page seven. An addition on page eight may add motivation to the scene which follows on page ten. Even were this not the case, the necessity for each actor to keep up with the show, not to get lost ever, would be sufficient. Everyone in the cast and crew should have all the cuts and additions.

There are several methods by which cuts are given to the actors. Most generally the early cuts—those given at the end of the table rehearsal or at the end of the first mike rehearsal—will merely be given to the cast and crew without anyone having attempted to find out to the second how much is being cut out. The director's instructions may sound something like this: "On page 5 cut from the period on line 11 through the rest of the page," or "On 7-4, cut from the beginning of Robert's speech through the end of Cathy's speech on 7-21 (Page 7, line 4, through page 7, line 21).

At the end of the integration rehearsal or dress rehearsal, when it is necessary to be very precise in cutting in order to eliminate just exactly the right amount, the director will often ask the actors involved to read the cut. The actors then read the cut in exactly the same tempo which they have used on the rehearsal just concluded. This is timed by the director and he may then deduct an accurate amount of time from the over-all time of the script.

Some directors will designate a cut as permanent or tentative. In either event the actor will mark the cut plainly so that he will have no difficulty following the script even though he must skip certain areas. Single phrases or speeches of a few lines are marked by running a line through them, and longer passages or scenes are outlined in pencil then crossed out with a large X or other marking. These are the so-called "standard" methods of marking cuts, but in

reality the only criteria are those of legibility and ease of understanding.

A cut may be designed as "tentative" if the director wants to rehearse the play and see how the timing and pacing are affected by the proposed cut. Unless he designates it as temporary or tentative, the actor may assume it is permanent. That does not mean, however, that it may not be put back in. For that reason the cut markings which the actor has made should not render the script illegible. They should be erasable.

Occasionally the deletion of a longer portion of the play necessitates the cutting of a whole page. Unless the director specifically directs the actors to discard that page, it should not be thrown away. The cut could be cancelled at the last moment, or a portion of the scene put back in at a later rehearsal. If, however, a revised or substitute page is given to replace one in the script, the old page should be discarded to prevent any mistake.

In the early stages of rehearsal the studio clock is still pursuing its natural leisurely pace, and there is not a feeling of being cramped for time. This is the period for exploration, and at the director's discretion cuts may be discussed. Later, however, when "the heat is on" and the minute hand of the clock seems to be approaching the showtime at an abnormally fast rate of speed, there must be absolute precision in the taking of cuts and noting of last-minute directions. The director gives the cut; the actor takes it quickly and reads it back for timing if the director so asks. The professional actor cannot afford to make mistakes on performance.

Preliminary timings are taken on the table and first mike rehearsals. During this time the characterizations are not yet crystallized and pacing is still fluid. When the dress rehearsal is reached, however, each component of the show should be set in the matter of timing. The director gets a final timing on the dress rehearsal, and he may reasonably expect his cast to hold that time on the performance. Professional radio actors can hold their timing on dress and air to within a very few seconds of each other. The student radio actor cannot be expected to parallel this performance, but certainly he should make such control one of his objectives.

TRANSITIONS

Bridging sequences. We have previously seen that a change of sequence is usually accompanied by one or more of the following: change in scene or locale, time, mood, or progression of action; or the introduction of a new character or dramatic element. These shifting dramatic patterns are closely integrated and every attempt should be made to provide a smooth transition from one sequence to the next. The reasons for paying particular attention to transitional material are:

1. To keep the action uninterrupted,
2. To keep mood in key,
3. To keep desired illusion,
4. To keep the listener interested.

A transition is the joining together of two sequences and joining them so that the action, mood, illusion, and interest are not only preserved, but enhanced.

The four colors of the sound canvas may be used, singly or in combination. No matter which ones are used—voice, sound effects, music, or silence—each element of the transition should lead smoothly into the other, and be absorbed by it. There are exceptions to this rule in the case of shock transitions (the stinger is an example), but in the main, the primary efforts toward smooth continuity of action, mood, and illusion should be maintained. If this continuity is to be maintained, these diverse elements must be meshed together ever so smoothly.

Leading in and out of transitions. In his study of the script, the director has made certain evaluations of the reasons for changing scenes, and of the logical and emotional aspects which are to be terminated or carried through to the next sequence. On the basis of these evaluations he decides how the transition is to be made: whether to use a board or a studio fade, musical transition, narration, a sound effects transition, or a combination. This leads to an extremely important point, namely, that the actor, being responsible for the ending of each scene and the beginning of the next, is a most important cog in the transition. If music is set in a certain

key and tempo for the beginning of the transition, the actor should lead into that at the end of his speech.

If, for instance, the scene ends on a note of excitement, the beginning of the transition will carry that excitement forward, crystallize it, then lead into the next sequence. It will be seen, therefore, that the beginning of the transition is concerned with ending the previous scene, the ending of the transition concerned with beginning the next scene, and the middle with fusing the two together. In the scene described immediately above, the excitement of the music must be led into by the actor, for even when live music is used, the actor is the more flexible of the two, and it thus becomes his duty to lead in properly. If recorded music is being used, his effort is even more important, for the record is inflexible. The feeling for the proper transition is something which may be acquired by intensive and analytical listening, and an awareness of the problems involved and the methods used for their solution.

The actual mechanics of leading in and leading out of a transition (the ending of the old scene and the beginning of the new) are more easily understood if the actor realizes that each complements the other. Remembering the diverse elements and the natural increase in volume on any kind of overlapping, the actor can often compensate for this volume increase by a very slight decrease in volume, especially on the lead in to the new scene. This may be done either by an almost imperceptible and quick fade in (total movement of only a few inches), or by elongating the first two or three syllables of his first speech. The most natural effect is obtained when the actor is able to combine both methods. Any peak in volume will jar the listener in the same manner as would a rough or out-of-time element in the bridge. Therefore in the fusing of the two elements each is partially subordinate for the instant that the overlap occurs.

Transition by change in perspective. In the preceding explanation of transitions we have in the main been considering the type which deals with a major change in sequences, where the change is in place or time. Another kind of transition is used to intensify dramatic mood or action when there is little if any change in time or

place. The transition consists in the shifting of the focus point, represented by the microphone, from objective to subjective; or as a change in the physical perspective of focus in the same sequence.

The first type, that of transition by mental perspective, is perhaps most commonly exemplified by that scene in which the speaker goes from presentational narration into an illusionistic scene. For example:

MIKE: The trail was getting colder and colder and I had no more idea of where my next clue was coming from than my creditors had of when they would collect last month's payments. So, I decided to go back to the apartment where the countess got the rub and see if I could get an inspiration. I dodged the cop downstairs and was just taking out the pass key I had swiped, when the door opened.

SOUND: *Door opening.*

MIKE: Well, Lieutenant Garrity, (*Sickly chuckle.*) great minds and all that sort of stuff, huh?

In this kind of transition the actor has, as we have said, the problem of changing from the presentational narrator to a character in the play itself. To accomplish this change, a change in microphone perspective is necessary, as well as a change in projection. Although there is in the last few lines some indication of the end of the scene, the change is fairly abrupt. If, however, the first line of the new scene were taken by another character—as is often the case for added dramatic impact—Mike would lead up even more to the emotional tone of the new character. We would have a very natural bit of foreshadowing, which would, however, not be obvious. As a matter of fact, if there were no lead up, the jar would be obvious to the listener and the dramatic effect either lost or seriously affected.

A variation of this type of transition occurs when the narrative portion is introspective (the character speaking to himself, or to nobody in particular, rather than obviously narrating). When correctly played, this method is most effective. The transition, going as it does from one type of the representational to another representational type, poses a very definite problem. If there is any kind of fade, no matter how short (as there is in the overlap between voice

and music in a conventional transition), there is often a loss in dramatic impact. The trick that usually gives the desired effect is a slight change in microphone position at the end of the speech. Come closer to the mike, reducing the volume output of the voice (keeping the level the same) and increasing the intensity slightly for the last phrase or two; then assume the previous mike position with a little more projection. This slight "swaying effect," a simple matter of playing the mike, usually will achieve the desired result. The volume is unchanged, but the slight change in mike perspective adds to the proper illusion.

PROJECTING PHYSICAL ACTION

MOVEMENT AND ACTION by the characters in a radio play are communicated to the listeners primarily through what the characters say and how they say it. During the course of a play there may be dozens of physical actions, both major and minor, which the characters perform. We shall discuss some of those which are quite common to many plays.

The technique of projecting or communicating action is predicated on the visualization by the actor of that action and the way it motivates his lines and his emotions. Unless the actor is able to visualize the scene and setting, the persons involved in the actions and their reactions, and the particular way which his own character acts and moves; the projection will be lacking in believability, no matter how polished his technique. The first essential, therefore, in any of the following physical actions is the mental visualization by the actor of what is taking place.

Some actions or movements are incidental to the plot or character, and others play important motivational roles. Variations of the same type of action may fall in each category. For instance, the fact that two persons may be walking while conversing may be incidental, but if they were running, the connotations of the action would be entirely different. Keeping these in mind, let us examine the peculiarities of some common actions.

Walking. When a person walks along, he has a certain rhythm in his voice because of the effect of his muscular movement upon

phonation. A person hurrying down the street to meet his wife would sound different from the character who is strolling along looking at the shop windows. The actor must key his method of speaking to his mental attitude and physical movements. The way he is walking affects the way he delivers his lines, and the reverse is of course true—that he must indicate by his reading the way or manner in which he is walking, for the physical action fills out for the listener the complete pattern of illusion. An example of dialogue while walking is given on page 381.

Running. In speeches which are delivered while running, the actor may add to the believability of the scene by approximating the motions of running. These external stimuli will add greatly to the final effect. Care should be taken not to blast the mike either with gusts of breath or half phonated gasps. The actor should play a little farther back from the mike than usual, for the voice projection will naturally be increased.

Sitting down and standing up. One of the most vivid demonstrations of how movement affects speech can be demonstrated by the simple actions of sitting down or getting up from a chair while speaking. This basic action, which may be translated into other actions such as getting in or out of a car, should be carefully thought out by the actor. What actually happens? The muscles go from a state of tension to a state of repose, and vice versa. Does not the same thing happen in such actions as lifting and carrying a bag, then setting it down? or pushing against a door? The pattern of muscular tension will be assisted by a slight movement off mike during the lines, which gives just enough change in microphone perspective to complement the voice stress pattern.

Calling. What happens when you call to someone a hundred feet away? You project your voice, increase your volume, and the pitch automatically comes up. This “projection,” a difficult term to describe, is perhaps best illustrated by thinking of the trajectory of a free object in flight. The outfielder throwing to home “projects” the ball in a graceful arc over the infield, and it comes to the catcher knee high. Believe it or not, some of the best results in an on-mike person’s calling have come from stepping back three or four feet

and directing his voice up over the mike to a person on the other side of the studio. The skeptic will probably say this is due to the mental effect it has upon the performer—and he may be right. At any rate, it often works. Experimentation is, of course, in order. Remember too, that a person naturally elongates the vowels when he calls to another, and there is a different phrasing and emphasis. Full volume cannot be used, but that lack will not be noticeable if the other natural effects are used. The off-mike caller follows the pattern of physical and mental action described above, but his position is always dependent on experimentation. See the scenes on pages 338 and 339.

Screams. This age of melodramas makes necessary a full complement of shrieks and screams in the repertoire of most actresses. These also represent a part of the stock in trade of actors. Because screams represent a very definite and quick increase in both pitch and volume, they present problems. If the actor uses full voice, there will definitely be a problem of overmodulation, and there is danger of damaging the mike. If he moves back too far, there will be a noticeable change in mike perspective and voice quality. A compromise is reached by the actor's turning off the beam of the mike and the engineer's lowering the volume. It is extremely important that the scream be consistent in timing and volume during rehearsal and air. See the scene on page 378.

Whispers. In order to get the effect desired, the ordinary procedure for whispering would seem to be to get up close to the mike and whisper directly into it. Unfortunately this is not true. When one whispers, there is an inordinate amount of air being ejected, compared to voiced words, and this strong current of air may very well blast the ribbon, thus producing just the opposite of the effect desired. If a voiced whisper is used close to the mike, the low frequencies which are predominant will be picked up out of proportion, thus destroying the effect. Each person must experiment, of course, but often the most desirable results are obtained by working at just a little less than the normal distance from the mike, at about 45 degrees to it, projecting with a little increased vigor a very slightly phonated whisper. One may not obtain quite the intimacy

desired, but that defect is more than made up by the effect of tonal naturalness. See the scene on page 378.

Laughing and crying. There is often a fine line of demarcation between laughing and crying. Each, of course, acts as an emotional release, and the first consideration, therefore, is to have the proper emotion to release. When either is forced out by the actor, it may be very difficult for the listener to tell just whether the person is laughing or crying. The problems of technique are quite similar in each. Unless a comic effect is desired, it is better to underplay a little to compensate for the additional emotional release.

The common pitfall is that of jumbling up the words so that the result is incoherence. The actor should mark key words and make sure that they get out in a reasonably coherent manner. The actor must also be careful of blasting, for great sobs and convulsive gasps produce gusts of air which the ribbon cannot take, if the actor is too close.

SOME MISCELLANEOUS TECHNIQUES

Cross-fades. When we speak of transitions, we usually think not only of a change of time or place, but also an expressed or implied change in the direction or type of action. The cross-fade may be technically labeled a transition in the same way that one speaks of the "letter rather than the spirit" of the law. In the cross-fade, however, the action, though perhaps not continuous, is unbroken—at least in spirit. With the idea of unbroken action in mind, it is easy to see that the cross-fade may be used for dramatic impact, or as a device for changing the place or scene. No matter for which basic reason it is used, the two parts are very closely related, and generally are two different aspects or approaches to the same action and mood.

Here is an example of a cross-fade which calls for a change in place:

JIM: *(As he writes.)* Dearest Louisa. The last plane of the air-lift has come to earth and is taxiing in to the strip in front of the administration building. There is lots of brass out there, complete with photographers and all the ceremonial gear. Everyone is happy that it is over and many of them for the same reason as mine.

BIZ: *Start X-fade, Jim and Louisa.* It means that soon I will be with you, my dear, nevermore, I hope . . .

LOUISA: (*On mike now.*) . . . to leave your side. This has been a long tour of duty, one that has left all of us drained of energy, left only with a determination to keep going until the job was done. Now it is done, and my one thought is that I will soon be back in the quiet tranquillity of your loving arms. My dearest love, Jim.

To contrast with the above, here is an example of cross-fading for dramatic effect.

ARMAND: (*Reading.*) My dear Armand. I have been ill for some time now (*Start X-fade with Camille.*) but I write to you each day in my journal.

CAMILLE: (*Fading in.*) but I write to you each day in my journal (*On mike.*) It is the only way I have of being near you. My dear, you would not know me now. Perhaps it is well you cannot see me, for I am . . .

* * * *

I hope vaguely for one word from you. No doubt it will never come. Only men are strong enough not to forgive. But whatever happens, Armand . . . be happy, my love. (*Start X-fade back to Armand.*) Be happy and try to forgive and forget.

ARMAND: (*Fading on.*) Be happy and try to forgive and forget.

MUSIC: *Sneak in B.G.*

ARMAND: Forget Camille? Forget? I would not forget if I could.¹

The actual mechanics of a cross-fade are simple enough, but the balancing of the two voices together to achieve the proper Perspective, and the relative timings of the two sometimes pose a tricky little problem. The delicate shadings necessary for effective presentation should not be overlooked; otherwise the desired effect may be obliterated by broken continuity of action.

In a cross-fade of the first variety—that of changing the place or

¹ From *Camille*, by Dumas fils. Adapted for radio by Lowell Johnson.

scene—the usual method is merely that of having one actor fade off one side of the mike while the other actor is fading on the other side. Because both are using the same mike, the levels and perspectives are entirely up to the actors; for the engineer cannot control the volume of one without affecting the other. In order to avoid a noticeable discrepancy of microphone perspective, the fade-in should be made by coming from an off-beam position to an on-beam position, and at the same time increasing in volume. The actual distance which the actor moves closer to the mike seldom exceeds two or three feet. The fade-off is just the reverse. The actor moves back and off the beam of the mike, and at the same time lowers his volume.

When a cross-fade is used for dramatic effect, the second voice is often distorted. The most commonly used device is the filter, because a filter connotes in the minds of most listeners the quality of unreality and non-presence. It is an “effect” that is desired, and the filter generally gives that effect better than would, for instance, a reverberation chamber. A decided difference in microphone perspective may be used, but the difference may not make for the emotional Perspective desired. At any rate, experimentation is in order.

Reading. Often in a dramatic script there will be a sequence in which a person reads from a letter or book. The actor must remember that in real life there is a distinct difference in the way a person talks and reads aloud. When one person talks to another, he often illustrates with gestures as he attempts to put across his own feelings and ideas. He punctuates, hesitates, thinks ahead, recalls—in short, there generally is an extemporaneous communication from one person to another. The person who is reading something to another is in reality reading it to himself too, and because he is savoring it or digesting it at the same time he is communicating it, there is a different comprehensional level employed.

When a person reads aloud, he looks ahead, reads in phrases, stresses certain words or can't for a moment make out a word or two (in a letter, for instance, which may be handwritten). He may stop reading, look up and interject a comment, then have to look for the place where he has stopped. He picks up the thread of what he has

been reading, mumbles a few words as he reads to himself until he comes to the point where he stopped, then stresses a phrase or two as he begins communicating again. Of course the reading and reactions will be in character, and characters differ. But in the main, every person reads aloud differently from the way he talks. These differences give authenticity to the presentation of the play. See the scene on page 377.

Speaking through closed doors. A most common situation in dramatic scripts is for a portion of dialogue to take place between two actors who are on opposite sides of a closed door. The microphone must be with either one or the other, and the opposite person, behind the door, must sound as if he is in the next room. How does a person actually sound when he is in the other room? His voice (as we hear it, and the mike is with us) sounds a little muffled and there is less volume than usual. To achieve this particular kind of quality and volume, mere distance from the microphone is not enough. To achieve the quality desired, the actor should hold in front of his face a suit coat or a cape, or other piece of drapery which will effectively trap many of the highs and give the desired muffled quality. In nearly every such situation experimentation is necessary, with varying weights and thicknesses of cloth held a varying distance from the mouth.

If, for instance, the door is a heavy one, a thick piece of fabric (an overcoat perhaps) will be used and will be held fairly close, say a foot, from the mouth. An ordinary door would require a suit coat or piece of monk's cloth held perhaps a couple of feet away. Quite important to remember is that the actor should be facing the mike (usually on the beam, though at a distance) and the muffling material should be between the mouth and the mike. Do not try to use your script to muffle your voice—the effect will not be true. Do not use a crumpled-up handkerchief in your mouth—the desired effect is a muffled tone, not a gagged one.

Equally as important as the physical effects on the voice are the psychological effects upon the characters being portrayed. When one is separated from another by means of an obstacle such as a closed door, there are such obvious communicatory compensations as in-

creasing the volume and projection, and a natural, if small, rise in pitch. These are natural reactions, and if they are lacking in the show, the listener will feel that lack, though he may not at once know why his reaction is unfavorable. Careful attention to visualization of scene must, therefore, be paid by the actor. See the scene on page 380.

Addressing an audience. The great majority of dialogue in most dramatic radio shows takes place between two or three characters, or at the most four. Often, however, we have a scene in which one of the characters addresses or talks to a group of people. As an example, the famous speech of Daniel Webster² comes immediately to mind (see page 329).

The character addressing the audience may be speaking to a group of ten or a hundred. He may be pleading, cajoling, or dominating them. He may be comic, humorous, or serious. The audience situation differs in each instance, but there are certain generalities true of most. The speaker projects a little more. He chooses his words with care, his approach is perhaps a little more impersonal, even though he may be completely in communication with his audience, and for purposes of drama we can think of it as being a little more presentational, even though the overtones of the sequence are strongly illusionistic.

The actor is able to present the idea of speaking out to a group of people only if he is able to visualize the scene and situation. When he does this, he unconsciously projects more, letting his voice come out, reaching the person even in the back. If, however, he does not compensate for this projection, he will find himself badly blasting the mike, thus forcing the engineer to reduce the volume to such a degree that his range will be quite limited. Moving back a bit from the mike, staying on the beam and speaking to a person opposite, who is perhaps back by the studio wall—these will help to project the visualization of the actor. These mechanical methods are supplementary aids—they do not and will not by themselves produce the desired effect without superior actor visualization.

² In *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, by Stephen Vincent Benét, adapted for radio by Charles Jackson.

Crowd scenes. Perhaps the most consistently difficult problem of production is that of making a crowd scene believable. Because each crowd scene is different, it is possible to speak only in very general terms.

Directors are sometimes not capable of visualizing a scene themselves so that they can communicate to the actors their ideas and wishes. Even so, it is probable that the fault of the majority of the crowd scenes lies with the actor's lack of understanding of the results for which he should strive, and a basic unwillingness to extend himself for background as much as he will for the foreground. The actor who is playing a second lead may unconsciously put himself just a cut above those who are playing bit parts, and thus not make his proper contribution to those sequences of the play which are not of direct concern to his particular character. This conscious or unconscious self-elevation seems true particularly in student and amateur shows. Be that as it may, the truly professional actor realizes that every contribution he makes to the show which makes for its greater acceptance by the audience will come back doubled.

The effect desired is generally one of clarity or definition. Crowds have personalities and drives, just as do individuals. They are a group or combination of groups in a particular situation where each person has certain drives or emotions which correspond to those of his neighbor. This basic motivation and temper should be clearly underlined. But a crowd is also made up of individuals, and even though the general effect desired may be one of a mood, individuals make up that mood.

For these reasons, the actors involved have two tasks: to indicate clearly the underlying motivations, drives, and temper of the crowd; and to perform as individuals to make for clarity of definition. This cannot be done by aimlessly meandering about the studio mumbling wurra-wurra or hubba-hubba. If the actor has been assigned a particular position, or if a pattern of changing positions has been assigned to him, then he should scrupulously adhere to that position or pattern. His vocal contributions should be set during rehearsal, and not deviated from during performance. He will keep a strict eye on the director so that he can make any necessary deviations; for

the apparent confusion of the studio is translatable into distinct sound components by the different mikes, then reassembled and fused into the desired whole by the engineer on the control board. One last word of warning. The actor is a member of a specific crowd. As such, he has a specific character. Well modulated, pear-shaped tones would hardly be present at a lynching, nor would raucous voices predominate in a tea shoppe. See the scenes on pages 354 and 358.

Telephone conversations. There are two methods of presenting telephone conversations in a dramatic show. In one play the listener hears both sides of the conversation, while in another he may hear only one side—that of the person in the scene. Over a period of time, both of these methods have become conventional in the sense that the listener accepts either one as natural and proper.

In the first mentioned the actors have fewer problems, for each person has his own microphone (one filter and one regular) and each can hear the other. In the second the actor must make compensations for the lack of an opposite person. The primary thing is of course to visualize the other end of the conversation. If this is done, there will not be a tendency to rush the conversation, thus making it sound unnatural. See the scene on page 386.

SOME FINAL DO'S AND DON'TS

MIKE POSITIONS and variations in position should be marked on your script. Hold your position when it is set. Don't creep up on the mike. This creeping is a natural tendency when one really gets in the mood of a tense scene. Restrain yourself a little. Be a Holder—not a Creeper.

When a fade-on or -off is in order, it is done merely to give the audience a picture of the action which is taking place. If, of course, you are not interested in your audience, you can change your mike placement without motivating lines. Most good actors want to let the audience in on those little secrets, and so are careful to avoid movements without covering and explanatory lines. Don't mask action. Do show action.

Most writers on radio have been guilty of overstressing the "inti-

macy" of the medium. True, the audience situation is intimate in that the listeners are in familiar surroundings, but there is no need for the actor to hold himself down too far. So long as the proper and desired Perspective is obtained, the actor is accomplishing his purpose insofar as technique is concerned. Radio is intimate, to be sure, but this does not mean that you should crawl into the mike. Don't force your character down your listener's throat, but don't at the same time go to the opposite extreme and try to cuddle up in the same chair with him. Do be a Guest. Don't be an Intruder.

Mikes were made to be spoken into, not blown into. Never blow into a mike, even for testing purposes. You may injure the delicate ribbon or diaphragm. If you must clear your throat or sneeze, turn away. If the show is on the air, try to head for a neutral corner. If the script calls for a cough, remember that when you are in the company of others you always turn your head. By doing the same in a show you will achieve very satisfactory results. Do respect your equipment. Don't abuse it.

In radio it is not only courteous to be prompt for appointments, but it is good business as well. Actors are paid for a certain amount of rehearsal. If you stroll in late, the actors you have been holding up are still being paid. The director has every right not to call back an actor who has been inexcusably late in either a commercial or non-commercial, student or professional show. If you have a good director who lets you have a breather before the air show, demonstrate your appreciation by getting back at the time he sets. Don't come dashing into the studio thirty seconds before the "On the Air" flashes. It should be unnecessary to add that anything stronger than black coffee before a broadcast is never tolerated. Do be prompt. Don't be a "ten o'clock scholar."

Everyone makes a mistake occasionally; even the best "flub" now and then. Not often, of course. Most flubs pass unnoticed unless the actor calls attention to it by repetition—stopping and going back, or allowing himself to get flustered or get out of character. Do cover up by going ahead. Don't call attention to your mistakes.

The director has made an effort to place each studio element so that each may see and be seen by the others. The most important

sight lines are those between the control room and the respective segments. It is frustrating, to say the least, when an itinerant actor strolls between the director and the organist or sound man just before an important cue. Do be a performer. Don't be a stroller.

A warning concerning meddling should not be necessary, but unfortunately it is. Leave strictly alone those ordinary studio paraphernalia which are no concern of yours. Pianos are to be played by musicians (as are guitars and xylophones), sound equipment to be used by the sound man, and engineers are generally fussy about their mikes. Don't be a meddler, period.

Anathema in any business is the person who always blithely absolves himself of any error by blaming someone else. Radio is no exception. If you make a mistake—admit it. Just don't make the same mistake twice. Do admit your mistakes. Don't pass the buck.

It is neither necessary nor desirable to have a separate microphone for each actor. Nor does the broadcasting company transfer to you title to a particular microphone during the show. Do share the mike. Don't be a mike hog.

Perhaps the most important thing for a radio player to remember is that he is part of a team and that the whole is equal to the sum of all its parts. If one part gets out of line, the whole will suffer. One may easily find a non-destructive method of satisfying his ego. Upstaging is not conducive to a smooth show. Don't try to grab all the glory for yourself. Do work with the rest of the team.

SECTION FOUR

PLAYS AND SCENES
FOR CLASS DISCUSSION
AND EXERCISE



CHAPTER

13

The plays

THE HITCH HIKER*

By Lucille Fletcher

- SOUND: *Automobile wheels humming over concrete road.*
- MUSIC: *Something weird and shuddery.*
- ADAMS: I am in an auto camp on Route Sixty-six just west of Gallup, New Mexico. If I tell it perhaps it will help me. It will keep me from going mad. But I must tell this quickly. I am not mad now. I feel perfectly well, except that I am running a slight temperature. My name is Ronald Adams. I am thirty-six years of age, unmarried, tall, dark, with a black mustache. I drive a 1940 Ford V-8, license number 6V-7989. I was born in Brooklyn. All this I know. I know that I am at this moment perfectly sane. That it is not I who has gone mad—but something else—something utterly beyond my control. But I must speak quickly. At any moment the link with life may break. This may be the last thing I ever tell on earth . . . the last night I ever see the stars. . . .

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MUSIC: *In.*

ADAMS: Six days ago I left Brooklyn, to drive to California. . . .

MOTHER: Goodbye, son. Good luck to you, my boy. . . .

ADAMS: Goodbye, mother. Here—give me a kiss, and then I'll go. . . .

MOTHER: I'll come out with you to the car.

ADAMS: No. It's raining. Stay here at the door. Hey—what is this? Tears? I thought you promised me you wouldn't cry.

MOTHER: I know, dear. I'm sorry. But I—do hate to see you go.

ADAMS: I'll be back. I'll only be on the coast three months.

MOTHER: Oh—it isn't that. It's just—the trip. Ronald—I wish you weren't driving.

ADAMS: Oh—mother. There you go again. People do it every day.

MOTHER: I know. But you'll be careful, won't you? Promise me you'll be extra careful. Don't fall asleep—or drive fast—or pick up any strangers on the road. . . .

ADAMS: Lord, no. You'd think I was still seventeen to hear you talk—

MOTHER: And wire me as soon as you get to Hollywood, won't you, son?

ADAMS: Of course I will. Now don't you worry. There isn't anything going to happen. It's just eight days of perfectly simple driving on smooth, decent, civilized roads, with a hot dog or a hamburger stand every ten miles. . . . (*Fade.*)

SOUND: *Auto hum.*

MUSIC: *In.*

ADAMS: I was in excellent spirits. The drive ahead of me, even the loneliness, seemed like a lark. But I reckoned without *him*.

- MUSIC: *Changes to something weird and empty.*
 Crossing Brooklyn Bridge that morning in the rain, I saw a man leaning against the cables. He seemed to be waiting for a lift. There were spots of fresh rain on his shoulders. He was carrying a cheap overnight bag in one hand. He was thin, nondescript, with a cap pulled down over his eyes. He stepped off the walk and if I hadn't swerved, I'd have hit him.
- SOUND: *Terrific skidding.*
- MUSIC: *In.*
- ADAMS: I would have forgotten him completely, except that just an hour later, while crossing the Pulaski Skyway over the Jersey flats, I saw him again. At least, he looked like the same person. He was standing now, with one thumb pointing west. I couldn't figure out how he'd got there, but I thought probably one of those fast trucks had picked him up, beaten me to the Skyway, and let him off. I didn't stop for him. Then—late that night, I saw him again.
- MUSIC: *Changing.*
- ADAMS: It was on the new Pennsylvania Turnpike between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh. It's two hundred and sixty-five miles long, with a very high speed limit. I was just slowing down for one of the tunnels—when I saw him—standing under an arc light by the side of the road. I could see him quite distinctly. The bag, the cap, even the spots of fresh rain spattered over his shoulders. He hailed me this time. . . .
- VOICE: *(Very spooky and faint.)* Hall-ooo. . . .
(Echo as through tunnel.) Hall-ooo. . . .!
- ADAMS: I stepped on the gas like a shot. That's lonely country through the Alleghenies, and I had no intention of stopping. Besides, the coincidence, or whatever it was, gave me the willies. I stopped at the next gas station.

- SOUND: *Auto tires screeching to stop . . . horn honk.*
- MECHANIC: Yes, sir.
- ADAMS: Fill her up.
- MECHANIC: Certainly, sir. Check your oil, sir?
- ADAMS: No, thanks.
- SOUND: *Gas being put into car . . . bell tinkle, et cetera.*
- MECHANIC: Nice night, isn't it?
- ADAMS: Yes. It—hasn't been raining here recently, has it?
- MECHANIC: Not a drop of rain all week.
- ADAMS: Hm. I suppose that hasn't done your business any harm.
- MECHANIC: Oh—people drive through here all kinds of weather. Mostly business, you know. There aren't many pleasure cars out on the Turnpike this season of the year.
- ADAMS: I suppose not. (*Casually.*) What about hitch hikers?
- MECHANIC: (*Half laughing.*) Hitch hikers *here*?
- ADAMS: What's the matter? Don't you ever see any?
- MECHANIC: Not much. If we did, it'd be a sight for sore eyes.
- ADAMS: Why?
- MECHANIC: A guy'd be a fool who started out to hitch rides on this road. Look at it. It's two hundred and sixty-five miles long, there's practically no speed limit, and it's a straight-away. Now what car is going to stop to pick up a guy under those conditions? Would you stop?
- ADAMS: No. (*Slowly, with puzzled emphasis.*) Then you've never seen anybody?
- MECHANIC: Nope. Mebbe they get the lift before the Turnpike starts—I mean, you know—just before the toll house—but then it'd be a mighty long ride. Most cars wouldn't want to pick up a guy for that long a ride. And you know—this is pretty lonesome country here

—mountains, and woods. . . . You ain't seen anybody like that, have you?

ADAMS: No. (*Quickly.*) Oh no, not at all. It was—just a technical question.

MECHANIC: I see. Well—that'll be just a dollar forty-nine—with the tax. . . . (*Fade.*)

SOUND: *Auto hum up.*

MUSIC: *Changing.*

ADAMS: The thing gradually passed from my mind, as sheer coincidence. I had a good night's sleep in Pittsburgh. I did not think about the man all next day—until just outside of Zanesville, Ohio, I saw him again.

MUSIC: *Dark, ominous note.*

ADAMS: It was a bright sunshiny afternoon. The peaceful Ohio fields, brown with the autumn stubble, lay dreaming in the golden light. I was driving slowly, drinking it in, when the road suddenly ended in a detour. In front of the barrier, *he* was standing.

MUSIC: *In.*

ADAMS: Let me explain about his appearance before I go on. I repeat. There was nothing sinister about him. He was as drab as a mud fence. Nor was his attitude menacing. He merely stood there, waiting, almost drooping a little, the cheap overnight bag in his hand. He looked as though he had been waiting there for hours. Then he looked up. He hailed me. He started to walk forward.

VOICE: (*Far off.*) Hall-ooo . . . Hall-ooo. . . .

ADAMS: I had stopped the car, of course, for the detour. And for a few moments, I couldn't seem to find the new road. I knew he must be thinking that I had stopped for him.

VOICE: (*Closer.*) Hall-ooo . . . Halllll . . . ooo. . . .

SOUND: *Gears jamming . . . sound of motor turning over hard . . . nervous accelerator.*

VOICE: (*Closer.*) Halll . . . oooo. . . .

ADAMS: (*Panicky.*) No. Not just now. Sorry. . . .

VOICE: (*Closer.*) Going to California?

SOUND: *Starter starting . . . gears jamming.*

ADAMS: (*As though sweating blood.*) No. Not today. The other way. Going to New York. Sorry . . . sorry. . . .

SOUND: *Car starts with squeal of wheels on dirt . . . into auto hum.*

MUSIC: *In.*

ADAMS: After I got the car back onto the road again, I felt like a fool. Yet the thought of picking him up, of having him sit beside me was somehow unbearable. Yet, at the same time, I felt, more than ever, unspeakably alone.

SOUND: *Auto hum up.*

ADAMS: Hour after hour went by. The fields, the towns ticked off, one by one. The lights changed. I knew now that I was going to see him again. And though I dreaded the sight, I caught myself searching the side of the road, waiting for him to appear.

SOUND: *Auto hum up . . . car screeches to a halt . . . impatient honk two or three times . . . door being unbolted.*

SLEEPY MAN'S

VOICE: Yep? What is it? What do you want?

ADAMS: (*Breathless.*) You sell sandwiches and pop here, don't you?

VOICE: (*Cranky.*) Yep. We do. In the daytime. But we're closed up now for the night.

ADAMS: I know. But—I was wondering if you could possibly let me have a cup of coffee—black coffee.

VOICE: Not at this time of night, mister. My wife's the cook

and she's in bed. Mebbe further down the road—at the Honeysuckle Rest. . . .

SOUND: *Door squeaking on hinges as though being closed.*

ADAMS: No—no. Don't shut the door. (*Shakily.*) Listen—just a minute ago, there was a man standing here—right beside this stand—a suspicious looking man. . . .

WOMAN'S VOICE: (*From distance.*) Hen-ry? Who is it, Hen-ry?

HENRY: It's nobuddy, mother. Just a feller thinks he wants a cup of coffee. Go back into bed.

ADAMS: I don't mean to disturb you. But you see, I was driving along—when I just happened to look—and there he was. . . .

HENRY: What was he doing?

ADAMS: Nothing. He ran off—when I stopped the car.

HENRY: Then what of it? That's nothing to wake a man in the middle of his sleep about. (*Sternly.*) Young man, I've got a good mind to turn you over to the sheriff.

ADAMS: But—I—

HENRY: You've been taking a nip, that's what you've been doing. And you haven't got anything better to do than to wake decent folk out of their hard-earned sleep. Get going. Go on.

ADAMS: But—he looked as though he were going to rob you.

HENRY: I ain't got nothin' in this stand to lose. Now—on your way before I call out Sheriff Oakes. (*Fades.*)

SOUND: *Auto hum up.*

ADAMS: I got into the car again, and drove on slowly. I was beginning to hate the car. If I could have found a place to stop . . . to rest a little. But I was in the Ozark Mountains of Missouri now. The few resort places there were closed. Only an occasional log cabin, seemingly deserted, broke the monotony of the wild wooded landscape. I *had* seen him at that

roadside stand; I knew I would see him again—perhaps at the next turn of the road. I knew that when I saw him next, I would run him down. . . .

SOUND: *Auto hum up.*

ADAMS: But I did not see him again until late next afternoon. . . .

SOUND: *Of railroad warning signal at crossroads.*

ADAMS: I had stopped the car at a sleepy little junction just across the border into Oklahoma—to let a train pass by—when he appeared, across the tracks, leaning against a telephone pole.

SOUND: *Distant sound of train chugging . . . bell ringing steadily.*

ADAMS: *{Very tense.}* It was a perfectly airless, dry day. The red clay of Oklahoma was baking under the southwestern sun. Yet there were spots of fresh rain on his shoulders. I couldn't stand that. Without thinking, blindly, I started the car across the tracks.

SOUND: *Train chugging closer.*

ADAMS: He didn't even look up at me. He was staring at the ground. I stepped on the gas hard, veering the wheel sharply toward him. I could hear the train in the distance now, but I didn't care. Then something went wrong with the car. It stalled right on the tracks.

SOUND: *Train chugging closer. Above this sound of car stalling.*

ADAMS: The train was coming closer. I could hear its bell ringing, and the cry of its whistle. Still he stood there. And now—I knew that he was beckoning—beckoning me to my death.

SOUND: *Train chugging close. Whistle blows wildly. Then train rushes up and by with pistons going, et cetera.*

ADAMS: Well—I frustrated him that time. The starter had worked at last. I managed to back up. But when the

train passed, he was gone. I was all alone in the hot dry afternoon.

SOUND: *Train retreating. Crickets begin to sing.*

MUSIC: *In.*

ADAMS: After that, I knew I had to do something. I didn't know who this man was or what he wanted of me. I only knew that from now on, I must not let myself be alone on the road for one moment.

SOUND: *Auto hum up. Slow down. Stop. Door opening.*

ADAMS: Hello, there. Like a ride?

GIRL: What do you think? How far you going?

ADAMS: Amarillo . . . I'll take you to Amarillo.

GIRL: Amarillo, Texas?

ADAMS: I'll drive you there.

GIRL: Gee!

SOUND: *Door closes—car starts.*

MUSIC: *In.*

GIRL: Mind if I take off my shoes? My dogs are killing me.

ADAMS: Go right ahead.

GIRL: Gee, what a break this is. A swell car, a decent guy, and driving all the way to Amarillo. All I been getting so far is trucks.

ADAMS: Hitch hike much?

GIRL: Sure. Only it's tough sometimes, in these great open spaces, to get the breaks.

ADAMS: I should think it would be. Though I'll bet if you get a good pick-up in a fast car, you can get to places faster than—say, another person, in another car.

GIRL: I don't get you.

ADAMS: Well, take me, for instance. Suppose I'm driving across the country, say, at a nice steady clip of

about forty-five miles an hour. Couldn't a girl like you, just standing beside the road, waiting for lifts, beat me to town after town—provided she got picked up every time in a car doing from sixty-five to seventy miles an hour?

GIRL: I dunno. Maybe she could and maybe she couldn't. What difference does it make?

ADAMS: Oh—no difference. It's just a—crazy idea I had sitting here in the car.

GIRL: (*Laughing.*) Imagine spending your time in a swell car thinking of things like that!

ADAMS: What would you do instead?

GIRL: (*Admiringly.*) What would I do? If I was a good-looking fellow like yourself? Why—I'd just *enjoy* myself—every minute of the time. I'd sit back, and relax, and if I saw a good-looking girl along the side of the road . . . (*Sharply.*) Hey! Look out!

ADAMS: (*Breathlessly.*) Did you see him too?

GIRL: See who?

ADAMS: That man. Standing beside the barbed wire fence.

GIRL: I didn't see—anybody. There wasn't nothing, but a bunch of steers—and the barbed wire fence. What did you think you was doing? Trying to run into the barbed wire fence?

ADAMS: There was a man there, I tell you . . . a thin gray man, with an overnight bag in his hand. And I was trying to—run him down.

GIRL: Run him down? You mean—kill him?

ADAMS: He's a sort of—phantom. I'm trying to get rid of him—or else prove that he's real. But (*Desperately.*) You say you didn't see him back there? You're sure?

GIRL: (*Queerly.*) I didn't see a soul. And as far as that's concerned, mister . . .

ADAMS: Watch for him the next time, then. Keep watching.

Keep your eyes peeled on the road. He'll turn up again—maybe any minute now. (*Excitedly.*) There. Look there—

SOUND: *Auto sharply veering and skidding. Girl screams.*

SOUND: *Crash of car going into barbed wire fence. Frightened lowing of steer.*

GIRL: How does this door work? I—I'm gettin' outta here.

ADAMS: Did you see him that time?

GIRL: (*Sharply.*) No. I didn't see him that time. And personally, mister, I don't expect never to see him. All I want to do is to go on living—and I don't see how I will very long driving with you—

ADAMS: I'm sorry. I—I don't know what came over me. (*Frightened.*) Please—don't go. . . .

GIRL: So if you'll excuse me, mister—

ADAMS: You can't go. Listen, how would you like to go to California? I'll drive you to California.

GIRL: Seeing pink elephants all the way? No thanks.

ADAMS: (*Desperately.*) I could get you a job there. You wouldn't have to be a waitress. I have friends there—my name is Ronald Adams—You can check up.

SOUND: *Door opening.*

GIRL: Uhn-hunh. Thanks just the same.

ADAMS: Listen. Please. For just one minute. Maybe you think I am half cracked. But this man. You see, I've been seeing this man all the way across the country. He's been following me. And if you could only help me—stay with me—until I reach the coast—

GIRL: You know what I think you need, big boy? Not a girl friend. Just a good dose of sleep. . . . There, I got it now.

SOUND: *Door opens . . . slams.*

ADAMS: No. You can't go.

GIRL: (*Screams.*) Leave your hands offa me, do you hear!
Leave your—

ADAMS: Come back here, please, come back.

SOUND: *Struggle . . . slap . . . footsteps running away on gravel . . . lowing of steer.*

ADAMS: She ran from me, as though I were a monster. A few minutes later, I saw a passing truck pick her up. I knew then that I was utterly alone.

SOUND: *Lowing of steer up.*

ADAMS: I was in the heart of the great Texas prairies. There wasn't a car on the road after the truck went by. I tried to figure out what to do, how to get hold of myself. If I could find a place to rest. Or even, if I could sleep right here in the car for a few hours, along the side of the road. . . . I was getting my winter overcoat out of the back seat to use as a blanket (*Hall-ooo*) when I saw him coming toward me (*Hall-ooo*), emerging from the herd of moving steers. . . .

VOICE: Hall-ooo . . . Hall-ooo. . . .

SOUND: *Auto starting violently . . . up to steady hum.*

MUSIC: *In.*

ADAMS: I didn't wait for him to come any closer. Perhaps I should have spoken to him then, fought it out then and there. For now he began to be everywhere. Whenever I stopped, even for a moment—for gas, for oil, for a drink of pop, a cup of coffee, a sandwich—he was there.

MUSIC: *Faster.*

ADAMS: I saw him standing outside the auto camp in Amarillo that night, when I dared to slow down. He was sitting near the drinking fountain in a little camping spot just inside the border of New Mexico.

MUSIC: *Faster.*

ADAMS: He was waiting for me outside the Navajo Reservation, where I stopped to check my tires. I saw him in Albuquerque where I bought twelve gallons of gas. . . . I was afraid now, afraid to stop. I began to drive faster and faster. I was in lunar landscape now—the great arid mesa country of New Mexico. I drove through it with the indifference of a fly crawling over the face of the moon.

MUSIC: *Faster.*

ADAMS: But now he didn't even wait for me to stop. Unless I drove at eighty-five miles an hour over those endless roads—he waited for me at every other mile. I would see his figure, shadowless, flitting before me, still in its same attitude, over the cold and lifeless ground, flitting over dried-up rivers, over broken stones cast up by old glacial upheavals, flitting in the pure and cloudless air. . . .

MUSIC: *Strikes sinister note of finality.*

ADAMS: I was beside myself when I finally reached Gallup, New Mexico, this morning. There is an auto camp here—cold, almost deserted at this time of year. I went inside, and asked if there was a telephone. I had the feeling that if only I could speak to someone familiar, someone that I loved, I could pull myself together.

SOUND: *Nickel put in slot.*

OPERATOR: Number, please?

ADAMS: Long distance.

OPERATOR: Thank you.

SOUND: *Return of nickel: buzz.*

LONG DISTANCE: This is long distance.

ADAMS: I'd like to put in a call to my home in Brooklyn, New York. I'm Ronald Adams. The number is Beechwood 2-0828.

LONG DISTANCE: Thank you. What is your number?

ADAMS: 312.

ALBUQUERQUE

OPERATOR: Albuquerque.

LONG DISTANCE: New York for Gallup.

(*Pause.*)

NEW YORK

OPERATOR: New York.

LONG DISTANCE: Gallup, New Mexico, calling Beechwood 2-0828.

(*Fade.*)

ADAMS: I had read somewhere that love could banish demons. It was the middle of the morning. I knew mother would be home. I pictured her, tall, white-haired, in her crisp house-dress, going about her tasks. It would be enough, I thought, merely to hear the even calmness of her voice. . . .

LONG DISTANCE: Will you please deposit three dollars and eighty-five cents for the first three minutes? When you have deposited a dollar and a half, will you wait until I have collected the money?

SOUND: *Clunk of six coins.*

LONG DISTANCE: All right, deposit another dollar and a half.

SOUND: *Clunk of six coins.*

LONG DISTANCE: Will you please deposit the remaining eighty-five cents?

SOUND: *Clunk of four coins.*

LONG DISTANCE: Ready with Brooklyn—go ahead please.

ADAMS: Hello.

MRS. WHITNEY: Mrs. Adams' residence.

ADAMS: Hello. Hello—Mother?

MRS. WHITNEY: (*Very flat and rather proper . . . dumb, too, in a frizzy sort of way.*) This is Mrs. Adams' residence. Who is it you wished to speak to, please?

ADAMS: Why—who's this?

MRS. WHITNEY: This is Mrs. Whitney.

ADAMS: Mrs. Whitney? I don't know any Mrs. Whitney. Is this Beechwood 2-0828?

MRS. WHITNEY: Yes.

ADAMS: Where's my mother? Where's Mrs. Adams?

MRS. WHITNEY: Mrs. Adams is not at home. She is still in the hospital.

ADAMS: The hospital!

MRS. WHITNEY: Yes. Who is this calling, please? Is it a member of the family?

ADAMS: What's she in the hospital for?

MRS. WHITNEY: She's been prostrated for five days. Nervous breakdown. But who is this calling?

ADAMS: Nervous breakdown? But—my mother was never nervous.

MRS. WHITNEY: It's all taken place since the death of her oldest son, Ronald.

ADAMS: Death of her oldest son, Ronald . . . ? Hey—what is this? What number is this?

MRS. WHITNEY: This is Beechwood 2-0828. It's all been very sudden. He was killed just six days ago in an automobile accident on the Brooklyn Bridge.

OPERATOR: (*Breaking in.*) Your three minutes are up, sir.

(*Pause.*)

OPERATOR: Your three minutes are up, sir. (*Pause.*)
Your three minutes are up, sir. (*Fade.*) Sir, your three minutes are up. Your three minutes are up, sir.

ADAMS: (*In a strange voice.*) And so, I am sitting here in this deserted auto camp in Gallup, New Mexico. I am trying to think. I am trying to get hold of myself. Otherwise, I shall go mad. . . . Outside it is night—the vast, soulless night of New Mexico. A million stars are in the sky. Ahead of me stretch a thousand

miles of empty mesa, mountains, prairies—desert. Somewhere among them, he is waiting for me. Somewhere I shall know who he is, and who . . . I . . . am. . . .

MUSIC:

Up.

MY UNCLE WILLY *

By Bill Sweeney

PAUL: Hi, everybody. My name's Paul. Got an Uncle and his name is Willy. He's got a wife and her name is Stella. Uncle Willy is quite a guy when you get to know him and I thought you might like to. His full name sounds like he was a college professor or something... William Ambrose Putnam Burns... but Uncle Willy never went past grade school. Smart though... he'd have to be to last with Aunt Stella. Boy... can she nag! And Uncle Willy is just one step ahead of being a henpecked husband. Aunt Stella is always bawling him out for one thing or another. You should have been with me one morning not so long ago. Uncle Willy was sitting in the rocker by the stove with his shoes off (*Fade.*) and smoking his pipe while Aunt Stella...

STELLA: (*Fading on.*)... and so there you sit all morning with your shoes off and smoking that smelly pipe! Day in and day out you just sit in that rocker and loaf while other men are out working to support their wives!

WILLY: Today is my birthday.

STELLA: Every day is your birthday.... I don't see how a man can be so lazy and live.

WILLY: Ummhmmmm.

STELLA: What?

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WILLY: Nothing.

STELLA: Oh . . . that pipe of yours stinks! Why aren't you smoking that good tobacco that I bought you for your birthday?

WILLY: I like this tobacco.

STELLA: William Burns . . . you are the limit . . . the absolute limit! I buy you a can of the best tobacco in Heiman's Cigar Store and you sit there and smoke that cheap hay you buy instead. Don't you do anything that's right? Must you always do things backwards?

WILLY: What's for supper?

STELLA: Pork chops. You make this kitchen look and smell like an old barn. And the next time the preacher visits and you offer him a drink . . . I'll . . .

WILLY: Just trying to be friendly.

STELLA: Friendly? Offering spirits to a man of his position? I was never so embarrassed in my life. And I told you whenever he called to put your shoes on and excuse yourself so you could put on a tie. And what do you do the very next time he calls? You just sit there and rock and smoke . . . and your sock had a hole in it. . . .

WILLY: Just so . . . a holy sock.

STELLA: Don't you joke about such matters. A man your age . . . you ought to be ashamed of yourself. You'd better learn some respect for your betters, Will Burns, and not think that the sun rises and sets on your head . . . and another thing, I've told you a dozen times not to come to dinner in your undershirt and . . . Paul . . . see if that pie is cool enough to take in off the pantry window . . . and there are some oatmeal cookies left in the jar.

PAUL: Yes, Aunt Stella.

WILLY: And, Paulie boy. . . see if there's any cold tea in that jar on the table . . . just as you go in the pantry.

PAUL: O. K.

STELLA: Hurry up, Paul . . . you can finish that book later.

PAUL: (*Fading.*) Yes, ma'am . . . I'm going now.

STELLA: That boy is going to ruin his eyes . . . always reading.

WILLY: Good for him to read . . . smarten him up.

STELLA: You're a fine one to talk. I don't see any improvement in you and you certainly hang on to the evening paper until you've just about worn the print off it. And if you'd read the employment column instead of the sport page, you'd be a lot better off. That money in the bank isn't going to last forever, you know . . . not the way you throw it away on your fair-weather friends and the bartenders. Just let me tell you, Mr. Burns . . .

SOUND: *Sudden tweet of whistle on kettle of boiling water.*

WILLY: (*Chuckles.*) Water's boiling in the kettle.

STELLA: Oh . . . (*Slight fade off.*) you think that's funny, do you? There.

SOUND: *Whistle out as teakettle is removed from stove.*

STELLA: (*Coming back on.*) It's about time we had a new stove, too. We've had that one for fifteen years.

PAUL: (*Fading in.*) Pie is cool enough, Aunt Stella. I put it on the table. The tea's all gone, Uncle Willy.

STELLA: Well, I'm not going to make any fresh tea. If your Uncle wants any, he can make it himself.

WILLY: Look in the cupboard . . . I put a bottle of cold tea there last week. Should still be there.

STELLA: Why, that will be as stale as muddy water. Why don't you make some fresh . . . why don't you . . .

WILLY: Let's go fishing, Paulie boy.

PAUL: Swell. When?

WILLY: This afternoon . . . down to Blue Bridge.

STELLA: This afternoon you said you'd weed the garden. . . . You've been promising to do it for a week. Now don't tell me you're going off traipsing again down to that dirty old bridge and waste . . .

WILLY: Yeeees, dahling. Yeeees, pet. Would you like to come and put the worms on the hook?

STELLA: (*Shudder of disgust.*) Ooooooh!

WILLY: (*Chuckles, fading.*)

PAUL: (*Down.*) You get what I mean? They just don't get along. Even though Uncle Willy is usually smart enough not to say too much, they still don't get along. Well, that afternoon we were sitting on the edge of Blue Bridge fishing and . . . (*Fade.*) . . . Uncle Willy was kinda rambling on like he does when Aunt Stella's not around to interrupt. . . .

WILLY: (*Fade in.*) . . . so you see, Paulie boy . . . it's live and let live. That's my motto. We're all different . . . so why try to change the other fellow's ways to suit yours. Remember that when you come to get married and don't tie up with a nervous old frost like your Aunt Stella.

PAUL: Uh huh. Bet you wish you were single.

WILLY: No . . . she's a good cook. Feel a nibble yet?

PAUL: Not a bite.

WILLY: Pull up your hook . . . let's see if the worm is still on it.

PAUL: Fish aren't biting so good today.

WILLY: Too early in the season for much luck.

PAUL: Uncle Willy.

WILLY: Yep.

PAUL: (*Hesitantly.*) Did you ever . . . work?

WILLY: Sure. Don't let your Aunt Stella give you the wrong idea. I've worked and plenty hard too . . . worked enough to put some money in the bank so's I don't have to work when I don't want to. Course, your Aunt Stella can't see it like that. But then she never will forgive the Almighty for only putting twenty-four hours in a day.

PAUL: (*Giggles.*)

WILLY: That's what I like about coming down here fishing.

PAUL: My worm's still on the hook.

WILLY: Throw it back in.

SOUND: *Splash of sinker hitting water from bridge.*

WILLY: Yep... down here it's just me and the fish. If I don't want to be President I can relax and let Truman handle the job. If I don't want to make a million I don't have to. And there's nobody to yammer in my ear about it.

PAUL: I like it here too.

WILLY: Enjoy it while you can. My ball and chain could... Up!

PAUL: You got a bite!

WILLY: Shhhhhh! Can you see him?

PAUL: No... the line is in the shadow under the bridge.

WILLY: Feels like a big one. Fish for supper, boy!

PAUL: Think it's a perch?

WILLY: Uh! There he is!

PAUL: (*Disappointed.*) Oh.

WILLY: Kinda small.

PAUL: Yeh.

WILLY: Well... (*Sighs.*)... take him off the hook and throw him back. Where's my bottle of tea?

PAUL: Right behind you.

WILLY: Not much left.

PAUL: Back you go.

SOUND: *Splash of water as fish hits.*

WILLY: Better have clam chowder tonite.

PAUL: You told Aunt Stella we'd have fish.

WILLY: This ain't the first time. Let's go. (*Fade.*) Maybe we can hitch a ride...

PAUL: (*Down.*) Well... we walked home. Uncle Willy was pretty tired when we got there... but he wouldn't let on a bit. He set right to work making his extra special kind of clam chowder... just took over the kitchen while Aunt Stella sat in a corner and watched every move he made. My Aunt Lou, the school teacher, was coming over for supper that night, and as soon as she arrived we all sat down to the table...

SOUND: *Slight rattle of spoons against china.*

STELLA: Oh, Will . . . you put milk in the chowder again.

WILLY: Sure . . . that's the way I always make it.

SOUND: *Slurp of soup as Uncle Willy shows his defiance.*

STELLA: Will . . . for heaven's sake . . . eat your soup quietly. Lou . . . some oyster crackers?

LOU: Thank you, Stella. This could stand some more clams, Will.

WILLY: This is clam chowder. . . not stew.

SOUND: *Uncle Willy slurps again.*

STELLA: Will!

WILLY: Did you want some more soup?

LOU: She wants you to stop making a noise while you eat your soup. Have some more crackers, Paul?

PAUL: Yes, Aunt Lou.

STELLA: How was school yesterday?

LOU: The same as ever. I'm getting to like Saturdays better and better.

WILLY: Gives you a chance to relax and take it easy.

STELLA: You should know . . . every day is Saturday for you.

LOU: Oh . . . Will. I was speaking to Mr. Ludkin today . . . you know, Superintendent of the State Asylum . . . well . . .

WILLY: More soup, Lou?

STELLA: Hush up, Will. Go on Lou . . . did Mr. Ludkin have a job for . . .

WILLY: How about some more soup, Paulie boy?

PAUL: Sure.

WILLY: Get the boy some more chowder, Stella.

LOU: I'll get it. Give me your plate, Paul.

WILLY: Here . . . fill mine while you're at it.

STELLA: What about Mr. Ludkin, Lou?

- LOU: (*Slightly off.*) Oh... he has a fine position open at the asylum and when I told him that Will wasn't working, he said he could use him.
- STELLA: Right away?
- LOU: Yes.
- WILLY: How is Mr. Ludkin these days? Still beat his wife? (*Laughs.*)
- STELLA: That's no joke. Mr. Ludkin is a fine man... he's worked hard ever since he was a young boy.
- LOU: (*Fading on.*) Yes... I can remember when he used to peddle our papers.
- STELLA: He's made something of himself... he has a fine position and something to show for his life.
- LOU: As I always tell my class, Stella... hard work and clean habits are the keys to success. Oyster crackers please, Paul.
- STELLA: I wish you could pound a little of that sense into Will's head.
- LOU: This will be a fine job for you, Will. Good pay and hours.
- WILLY: Don't want to work in an insane asylum.
- STELLA: You just don't want to work anywhere. I swear, Will Burns, you are without a doubt the laziest, most shiftless mortal alive today! A man of your age...
- LOU: Oh, Will... why don't you go to work and relieve Stella's mind of the worries that she has? You owe that to her at least. You married her.
- SOUND: *Slurp of soup.*
- STELLA: And never mind the sarcasm!
- WILLY: I didn't say a word, pet.
- STELLA: You may not have said anything...
- LOU: Take this job, Will... for our sake.
- WILLY: I didn't marry you too, did I?
- LOU: Stella and I worry about you.

STELLA: Some nights I can't even sleep.

WILLY: I can.

STELLA: Yes . . . *you* can . . . you never let a thing bother you! You let me do all the worrying in this family. You're going to take this job, William Burns, you're going up the hill to the asylum first thing Monday morning and take it. . . .

LOU: Mr. Ludkin will be expecting you at eight o'clock. It's time you went to work . . . high time!

WILLY: (*Pause.*) You know what?

STELLA: What?

WILLY: I been thinking . . . let's buy a car.

SOUND: *Two spoons hitting dish.*

PAUL: A car, Uncle Willy?

LOU: What an idea!

STELLA: You've been drinking again!

WILLY: I said . . . a car and I mean a car. (*Fade.*) Now, there's one in the window at Jed Wilson's place. . . .

PAUL: (*Down.*) They got the car too . . . a nice red, four-door job. . . . Aunt Stella got taken with the idea and was just as excited as Uncle Willy when we went out for our first drive the following Sunday . . . (*Fade.*) . . . with Uncle Willy driving, and me up in the front seat with him.

SOUND: *Car motor . . . establish . . . and hold under.*

WILLY: Sure rides nice.

(*Both Stella and Lou are slightly off in this scene.*)

STELLA: What beautiful scenery out this way.

WILLY: Haven't been out here since I was a boy.

LOU: Oh! There's the little school where I first began to teach. There's a family living in there now. My . . . they certainly have let the place go to wrack and ruin.

STELLA: Just think . . . it would take us all day to walk out here.

PAUL: You sure learned to drive in a hurry, Uncle Willy.

WILLY: Nothing to it, Paulie boy. Hungry?

PAUL: You bet.

WILLY: We'll be at the restaurant in a few minutes now. It's just beyond that hill.

STELLA: Yes . . . and remember your table manners, Will. There's a lot of professional people eat at the Mountain Grill. . .

WILLY: Yes, pet.

SOUND: *Car motor up and segue into light luncheon music, murmur of people in BG . . . occasional clink of china.*

LOU: This is a lovely place to eat. And music too.

STELLA: We'll have to come here often, now that we have the car.

PAUL: Anybody here that you know, Aunt Lou?

LOU: Yes . . . I saw several of the teachers from the school as we came in. They eat here every Sunday.

WILLY: Ah . . . here comes the waiter with the turkey.

STELLA: Will . . . take that napkin out of your collar!

LOU: Oh, for heaven's sake, Will . . . remember where you are!

WILLY: What do you want me to do . . . wear it on my head?

LOU: SHHH! Here's the waiter.

SOUND: *Dishes being set on table . . . music stops.*

LOU: Thank you.

STELLA: Thank you.

WILLY: Good looking turkey, John.

WAITER: Yes, sir.

WILLY: Nice crowd here today.

WAITER: Yes, sir. Will that be all?

WILLY: Guess so . . . but don't leave town. I may want seconds.

STELLA: (*Pause.*) Must you talk to every Tom, Dick, and Harry you see?

WILLY: Just being friendly. Pass the salt, pepper, and ketchup.

LOU: You'll just spoil the taste of your turkey.

WILLY: (*Very quietly.*) You eat your dinner and I'll eat mine.

STELLA: This stuffing is delicious.

LOU: Oh . . . there's Mr. Trotter, our principal.

STELLA: Getting fat, isn't he?

LOU: Not at all . . . I think he looks very distinguished.

WILLY: Drinks like a fish.

LOU: He does not! You have no right to say such things.

STELLA: I've heard the same thing. Muffins, please, Paul.

SOUND: *Loud crunch of celery.*

STELLA: For heaven's sake, Will. Don't cut that celery off so close to your mouth with your knife. It looks terrible!

LOU: You're embarrassing all of us. And Mr. Trotter is looking right this way.

WILLY: (*Calling slightly.*) Hello, Trotter. Nice day.

LOU: Shut up!

STELLA: Stop waving your knife at him like a flag!

LOU: This is positively the last time that I'm coming to this place with you. . . .

WILLY: Pass the muffins.

SOUND: *Crunch of celery.*

STELLA: (*Fade.*) And put that knife down when you eat your celery.

PAUL: (*Down. Chuckling.*) Uncle Willy was always Uncle Willy wherever we went. Never put on airs for anybody. Well, he liked the car for a while, but pretty soon Aunt Stella's back-seat driving was driving him crazy. . . . I remember the trip we took to Pittsburgh . . . it was a sunny day and we were going along the state highway . . .

SOUND: *Motor up . . . establish . . . fade and hold under.*

PAUL: Uncle Willy. . . can't we go faster than twenty miles an hour?

WILLY: Not with a new car, Paulie boy. Besides, twenty miles an hour is just the right speed for a trip . . . gives me a chance to see all the scenery.

STELLA: How fast are you driving, Will?

WILLY: Twenty.

STELLA: Seemed to me as if we were going faster. Is it twenty on the speedometer, Paul?

PAUL: Yes, ma'm.

WILLY: Anything else, pet?

STELLA: We'd better have the oil checked at the next station we see.

WILLY: We just had it checked yesterday.

STELLA: We'll take no chances.

WILLY: The garageman told me before we left home that the oil would be fine all the way to Pittsburgh.

STELLA: What does he know about it? He's not out here on the road with us.

WILLY: He's the garageman, isn't he? Cars are his business . . . he knows what oil she'll take.

STELLA: Stop at the next station anyhow. Watch that car behind you . . . he looks like he's going to pass. Will . . . slow down and let him get by you.

SOUND: *Car slowing down . . . fade motor slightly.*

PAUL: Not to ten miles an hour, Uncle Willy!

STELLA: Slow down, Will, so he can go by us . . . makes me nervous to have a car following us so close.

SOUND: *Motor fade and out.*

WILLY: How's that?

STELLA: Well . . . you didn't have to come to a dead stop.

SOUND: *Quick fade in and out of passing car.*

PAUL: Why don't we go more than twenty, Aunt Stella? We'll never get to Pittsburgh this way.

WILLY: Your Aunt Stella knows all about cars, Paulie. Don't ever think she could be wrong about anything.

STELLA: Never mind the sarcasm, Will Burns. It wasn't my idea to stop out here in the middle of nowhere to let that car pass us. If you'd learn how to drive right I wouldn't have to keep telling you what to do next every five minutes. I wish for once that I could relax here in the back seat when we're out for a drive.

SOUND: *Starter. Several tries.*

STELLA: What's the matter now?

WILLY: Will you shut up for five seconds.

STELLA: Don't tell me to shut up!

PAUL: (*Whispering.*) Your ignition is turned off.

WILLY: Oh.

STELLA: Well . . . start up . . . you know so much about driving.

SOUND: *Motor starting . . . sustaining . . . hold under.*

PAUL: You got it, Uncle Willy.

WILLY: Roll up the windows.

STELLA: What for?

WILLY: I feel chilly.

STELLA: All right. Paul . . . your window too.

WILLY: Hand me my pipe out of the glove compartment.

SOUND: *Click of compartment being opened.*

PAUL: Here . . . and the tobacco.

WILLY: Fill it for me.

STELLA: Be careful at that crossroad up ahead . . . look both ways for traffic. And slow down before you start across. Paul, is there another egg sandwich left in the bag?

PAUL: Just a second . . . I'm filling Uncle Willy's pipe.

STELLA: You're not going to smoke that stinking thing in a closed car, Will?

PAUL: Here y'are, Uncle Willy. Hold still, I'll light it for you.

SOUND: *Striking of match and deep breaths sucking on pipe.*

WILLY: Thanks, Paulie. (*Whisper.*) This'll shut her up.

STELLA: Don't puff so hard on that pipe . . . whew . . . that tobacco you smoke . . . why didn't you bring the good stuff that I bought you for your birthday . . . whew . . . Will . . . for heaven's sake.

WILLY: What is it, dahling?

STELLA: Why must you smoke . . . (*Cough.*) . . . that . . . (*Cough.*) . . . Will! Put that . . . (*Cough.*) . . . My asthma . . . (*Prolonged coughing and fade. Fade motor simultaneously.*)

PAUL: That sure made things quiet in the car, as a matter of fact, everything was swell until Uncle Willy's pipe went out and (*Fade.*) we hit that steep hill going twenty miles an hour. . . .

SOUND: *Fade in motor and hold under.*

PAUL: Better speed up, Unk . . . that hill is pretty steep.

WILLY: I'll just shift into second . . . nothing to it with a new car.

PAUL: I dunno. . . .

WILLY: Here we go . . . I'll just shift . . .

SOUND: *Shifting of car gears.*

WILLY: There.

PAUL: We're not moving up very fast.

WILLY: Don't have to.

PAUL: We're only doing seven miles an hour and the top's a long way off. . . .

WILLY: Don't be like your Aunt Stella.

SOUND: *Motor begins to pound under the strain.*

STELLA: Will . . . watch what you're doing . . . this car is shaking to pieces.

PAUL: Better shift again.

SOUND: *Shifting of gears.*

STELLA: You shouldn't have to shift twice on a hill . . . you should be able to shift once and go right to the top.

PAUL: We're almost stopped! Shift again, Uncle Willy!

SOUND: *Shifting of gears.*

STELLA: Stop shifting those gears . . . you'll have them all worn out before we even get to Pittsburgh! You don't know any more about driving a car than a ten-year-old child! This is the last we'll take a long trip with you at the wheel.

SOUND: *Shifting of gears.*

STELLA: You'll have this car ruined before we get to the top of the hill! You are certainly a fine one to have along as a driver. Paul could drive better than you. . . .

SOUND: *Motor cuts out dead.*

WILLY: Dad blast it!

STELLA: Will . . . put on your brake . . . We're rolling backward down the hill. . . .

WILLY: Let 'er roll, blast it, let 'er roll!

MUSIC: *Exciting . . . builds to a climax . . . then softens away. . . .*

PAUL: Aunt Stella was quiet all the rest of the way to Pittsburgh. We stayed about a month and then came home. The car held up fine, but Uncle Willy didn't . . . so they sold it. . . . He took a job too . . . that one at the asylum . . . sure surprised us. I was wondering how long it would last . . . (*Fade.*) . . . and one afternoon while I was walking him home from work along the main street . . .

SOUND: *Traffic noises establish and hold in BG.*

PAUL: Have a hard day, Uncle Willy?

WILLY: So so.

PAUL: Long walk up to the asylum, isn't it?

WILLY: Kinda. At least I don't have to listen to your Aunt Stella while I'm up there. No sir, that's one thing that . . . (*Suddenly groans sharply.*)

PAUL: What's the matter?

WILLY: (*Pained.*) My knee . . . gone bad on me again . . . can't walk.

PAUL: Can't you make it to the house?

WILLY: Not now . . . I'll just sit here on the curb. Ahhhhhhhhhhhh.

PAUL: Can I do anything?

WILLY: No . . . the knee just needs rest. Might as well have a smoke while I'm at it.

WOMAN: (*Off.*) Look at that old drunk sitting in the gutter with his son.

MAN: (*Off.*) Come along and stop staring.

WOMAN: (*Off.*) It's a shame . . . and a boy of his age having to sit out in the street in front of a saloon with his old drunken father.

WILLY: What drunk are them two talking about, Paul?

PAUL: I dunno.

WILLY: I don't see any drunk.

WOMAN: (*Coming on a bit.*) You ought to be ashamed of yourself! Yes, you!

WILLY: Say, who do you think you're talking to?

MAN: (*Still off a little.*) For heaven's sake, come along, dear.

WILLY: The dirty nerve of you . . . an honest working man sits down to rest his crippled knee and the likes of you . . . (*Projecting.*) Go on . . . run away. Go someplace and hide your head in shame! (*Normal level.*) Did you see that, Paulie. People just can't let other people alone . . . always have to be sticking their long noses in where they don't belong!

PAUL: Wanna go, Uncle Willy?

WILLY: Not yet . . . I see we're stopped in front of Petrucci's Saloon. Here's a dime . . . go get yourself a soda . . . I'm going inside here where it's cool to rest my knee in privacy. (*Fade.*) Meet me here in about fifteen minutes. . .

- PAUL: (*Down.*) When we got home, Aunt Stella first smelled the beer and then saw Uncle Willy's limp. (*Fade.*) She didn't waste any time in sailing into him. . . .
- STELLA: Drinking again! I thought you weren't going to drink while you were working on the job?
- WILLY: (*Groans.*)
- STELLA: Beer give you a stomach ache? . . . Well, what can you expect. . . .
- PAUL: It's his knee, Aunt Stella.
- STELLA: What about his knee?
- WILLY: (*Painfully.*) Move aside from the door, woman, and let me sit down.
- STELLA: What's the matter with your knee?
- WILLY: Same old trouble. Hurts like the devil when I put my weight on it. Ooooooh.
- PAUL: It happened downtown.
- STELLA: In a saloon, no doubt.
- PAUL: Near one.
- STELLA: Just what I thought.
- WILLY: Any tea in the pantry?
- STELLA: NO . . . there's no tea. And if you think this knee business is the way you're going to get out of having to go to work, Will Burns, you've got another think coming!
- WILLY: Here . . . I'll roll up my trouser and let you take a look at it. (*Groans.*) There.
- STELLA: Mmmm. That's pretty swollen.
- WILLY: I told you. I can hardly stand on the leg.
- STELLA: I'll get some liniment.
- WILLY: No.
- STELLA: Why not?
- WILLY: Don't believe in it. Won't do any good.
- STELLA: Don't be a fool.

WILLY: It'll heal by itself. Give it time.

STELLA: Well, then . . . go to Doctor Griswold and have him take a look at it.

WILLY: No. Let nature heal it.

STELLA: Will, you are the most pig-headed . . . look here, Doctor Griswold is a very fine man and he can fix you' up in no time.

WILLY: No.

STELLA: Yes.

WILLY: I said no, pet.

STELLA: I said yes!

WILLY: And I said no!

MUSIC: *Brief bridge suggestive of sharp conflict . . . cut cold.*

PAUL: Uncle Willy went to the Doctor . . . the knee got so bad that he couldn't even move out of the house some days. . . . Doctor Griswold told him he'd better go to a warmer climate for a cure . . . so the next day, Uncle Willy left for Florida . . . alone. It was a whole week before we heard from him. (*Fade.*) Aunt Stella and I were having lunch in the kitchen when the postman brought Uncle Willy's first letter. . . .

STELLA: (*Fading in.*) Well, finally . . . a letter from your Uncle Willy.

PAUL: Where's it from?

STELLA: Get my specs. They're in the cupboard over the sink.

PAUL: (*Fading.*) I'll bet he's having a swell time . . . it's nice and warm down there.

STELLA: (*Projecting slightly.*) So I've heard.

PAUL: (*Fading on.*) Here you are. Hurry up and open it.

STELLA: Don't be so impatient. Let's see . . . Miami!

PAUL: Boy!

SOUND: *Letter being torn open . . . taken from envelope and unfolded.*

STELLA: Hm.

PAUL: What?

STELLA: He starts "Dear Stella . . ."

PAUL: Oh.

STELLA: (*Pleased.*) Hm.

PAUL: Yeah?

STELLA: He wishes I could be there to enjoy the tropics with him.

PAUL: Read it out loud, Aunt Stella.

STELLA: All right. "Dear Stella (*Very slight pause.*) Well, here's your old man in the land of sunshine. Wonderful place. You can reach over a fence and just pick an orange off a tree. . . ." Imagine, Paul!

PAUL: Sounds swell.

STELLA: "It's so warm that at night I sit in the rocker on the porch in my shirt sleeves. I'm staying in a boarding house . . . lucky to get even this outside room . . . this town is jam full of people. I am getting tan and I spend a lot of time at the beach. Prices are high as a kite . . . but I get a good enough meal for sixty-five cents. . . ." Sixty-five cents! That man is just throwing money away down there!

PAUL: Go on, Aunt Stella.

STELLA: "Every time I see a car from Massachusetts, I run over and tell them I'm from the same state." He would . . . "Haven't met a soul I know yet, but I will sometime. My knee is better already . . . I should be home in about three weeks. Tell Paulie hello for me. Your husband . . . William. P. S. I'm sending you a cocoanut."

PAUL: A cocoanut?

STELLA: That's what he says. Hmph. More trash around the house. (*Fade.*) Well, I guess we won't hear from him again until he gets back.

PAUL: (*Down.*) But we did. At the end of three weeks Aunt Stella began to get picture postcards one after the other. . . .

- MUSIC: *Fade in and hold under . . . warm, tropical music.*
- VOICE: Date: the tenth. Postmark: Miami, Florida. A view of Miami beach.
- WILLY: Stella . . . Leg has gone bad again. Staying another week. See you then. Your husband . . . William.
- MUSIC: *Stinger . . . then down under again.*
- VOICE: Date: the twenty-first. Postmark: Miami, Florida. A view of the alligator pool in the park.
- WILLY: Dear Stella . . . Had hoped to leave a couple days ago. Weather here turned cool and my leg is worse. Will write to tell you when I'll be home. Your hubby . . . Will.
- MUSIC: *Stinger . . . then down under again.*
- VOICE: (*Wearily.*) Date: twenty-ninth. Postmark: Key West. A view of the village and waterfront.
- WILLY: (*Spritely.*) Stella dear . . . Very quiet here in Key West. Knee improving. Feels much better. Guess I'll be home soon. William.
- MUSIC: *Up and fade for.*
- PAUL: Finally Uncle Willy did come home. He was all tan . . . looked almost like an Indian. He was happier than I had ever seen him . . . didn't seem like you could make him mad anymore. Still . . . there was something strange about him . . . I couldn't tell right off what it was . . . but at dinner that night came the pay-off . . . (*Fade.*) Aunt Lou was eating with us . . . a nice chicken dinner . . .
- SOUND: *Occasional rattle of china . . . routine dinner sounds.*
- LOU: More chicken, Will?
- WILLY: Pass the chicken, will you, Stella?
- LOU: I just offered you the chicken.
- STELLA: Here. Lou just asked you if you'd like some more.
- WILLY: Fine bird, Stella. Only had one chicken dinner all the time I was in Florida. Meat's hard to get down there.
- STELLA: Did you have any sea food?

WILLY: I guess it's because there are so many tourists there. Must be thousands of people from out of state eating in all the restaurants.

STELLA: (*Louder.*) Did you have any sea food?

WILLY: What?

STELLA: (*Louder still.*) Did you have any sea food?

WILLY: Yes . . . yes . . . plenty of lobster and the biggest shrimp I ever saw in my life.

PAUL: Any clam chowder, Uncle Willy?

WILLY: Wish we could get shrimp that big up here. Make fine salads.

LOU: (*Loudly.*) Will . . . Paul asked you a question.

WILLY: Oh? What, Paulie?

PAUL: (*Loudly.*) Did you have any clam chowder?

WILLY: Yes . . . you will have to talk louder.

STELLA: What is the matter with him . . . he's been this way ever since he got home.

LOU: It's just like he were hard of hearing.

STELLA: His hearing was fine when he left home. . . .

LOU: (*Loudly.*) Will . . . Will!

WILLY: What'll you have, Lou?

LOU: (*Loudly.*) Can't you hear?

WILLY: Yes . . . I can hear you. Pass the salt.

LOU: (*Loudly.*) I know you can hear me now . . . I'm practically shouting. Is your hearing bad?

STELLA: Can't you hear well?

WILLY: Not as well as I used to. Hit me in Key West . . . I can hear when you talk loud though. You know, I should still be in Florida . . . my knee is beginning to kick up again already. I should still be basking in the sun out on Key West.

STELLA: Well...isn't that just like you? You were gone long enough to vote down there and now that you're back you're complaining. I never saw it to fail, Will Burns....

WILLY: Did you show Lou the cocoanut I sent you, Stella?

STELLA: What?

LOU: He couldn't hear you.

STELLA: Oh, for heaven's sake. I'll be hoarse trying to make myself heard.

WILLY: The cocoanut I found...but it cost me seventy cents to mail the thing. Lots of cocoanuts down around Miami...got some picture cards I'll show you later....

STELLA: (*Loudly.*) Do you want lemon pie or chocolate cake for dessert?

WILLY: I believe I'll have a little of both.

STELLA: Lou...(*Fade.*)...come out in the pantry with me and help me serve up the pie and cake.

LOU: All right. You want the pie, don't you, Paul?

PAUL: Uh...huh.

STELLA: (*Off and slightly muffled.*) Lou?

LOU: (*Fading rapidly.*) Coming, Stella.

SOUND: *Clink of fork on plate.*

PAUL: Gee, Uncle Willy...that's tough about your getting deaf....(*Suddenly remembering and loudly.*) I mean, I'm sorry you're...

WILLY: (*Quietly.*) Yes...it's just one of those burdens in life. But I don't mind it as much as most people, I guess.

PAUL: Say...can you hear me when I talk this low?

WILLY: Why? Got something special on your mind you want to tell me?

PAUL: No...but...

WILLY: (*Chuckling.*) A man can learn a lot in Florida.

PAUL: Yeah...yeah...(*Laughs.*)

SOUND: (*Uncle Willy's chuckle fades as Paul's laugh builds into*)—

PAUL: (*Still laughing a little.*) And that's my Uncle Willy. Kinda thought you might like to hear about him. Good-night.

MUSIC: *Curtain.*

THE DEATH OF THE AVERAGE MAN *

By Martin J. Maloney

MUSIC: *Opening curtain . . . something metropolitan.*

REPORTORIAL

VOICE: Now, Mr. Johnson, don't be nervous. Stand up close to the microphone when you speak. . . . Now what is your first name, Mr. Johnson?

JOHNSON: James.

REPORTORIAL

VOICE: And your wife calls you Jimmy, does she?

JOHNSON: (*A little embarrassed.*) That's right.

REPORTORIAL

VOICE: Any children?

JOHNSON: Two. Boy and a girl. Uh . . . I've got a picture somewhere. . . .

REPORTORIAL

VOICE: After the program, Mr. Johnson. Our listeners can't see it, you know.

JOHNSON: Oh. (*Laughs.*) Guess I'm not used to all this business.

REPORTORIAL

VOICE: You're doing splendidly. Now, Mr. Johnson, we want to know all about you. What do you do for a living?

JOHNSON: I'm a bookkeeper.

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REPORTORIAL

VOICE: I see. Salary?

JOHNSON: Well . . . three thousand a year.

REPORTORIAL

VOICE: Own your own home?

JOHNSON: No. You see, Helen and I always thought we'd buy, but . . . Well, you know how it is. We've got a pretty nice place, though.

REPORTORIAL

VOICE: I can imagine. Where did you go to school, Mr. Johnson?

JOHNSON: Why, I only had one year of college. I quit and went to work. That was when I got married.

REPORTORIAL

VOICE: I see. Any investments?

JOHNSON: Two kids. That's all the investment we can afford right now.

REPORTORIAL

VOICE: Now, Mr. Johnson, I'd like you to answer one more question.

JOHNSON: Sure.

REPORTORIAL

VOICE: When you were a boy, did you want to grow up and be the president of the United States?

JOHNSON: Why . . . why, yes. I guess I did.

REPORTORIAL

VOICE: Did you think you could do it?

JOHNSON: Sure. Why not?

REPORTORIAL

VOICE: That settles it, Mr. Johnson. I think we can say that you're a good specimen of the average man.

MUSIC: *Strong dramatic cue—establish, then under . . .*

NARRATOR: This is a man; living in a place and a moment of time, shaped by the complex and shifting pattern of events;

of wars and depression and births and lives about him and death over all—and himself determining the pattern. Let us deal, then, in large resounding terms. Let us take the long view of events. Let us set down in terms of moments and places and things remembered or forgotten, the life . . . and death . . . and life of a man.

MUSIC: *Up and out.*

NARRATOR: Let us treat first of the prelude to economic pressure. Here is James Johnson, bookkeeper. He is sitting at his desk in an office, a few months after the market crashed. The time is March, 1930.

SOUND: *Office noises. Typing and occasional voices in BG thruout.*

ADA: (*Deep mannish voice.*) Good morning, Johnson!

JOHNSON: (*Absently.*) What? . . . Oh, good morning, Ada. What's the latest from the stables?

ADA: All right, Johnson. Don't strain your masculine superiority. I'll have you know I had ten on Preparation in the two o'clock yesterday, and he came in at three to one. Had a hunch.

JOHNSON: (*Joshing.*) Lend me five till Monday?

ADA: I will not! I'm saving for a rainy day—as you ought to be doing, if you had an ounce of sense.

JOHNSON: Most of my days are pretty moist, Ada. Wife and family takes money.

ADA: Nitwits, sailors and millionaires ought to get married. Plain human beings are better off if they let it alone.

SOUND: *File drawer opened and paper rattled.*

ADA: Now where in blazes did I put that invoice?

JOHNSON: Right hand top drawer. I thought women were supposed to be so efficient around an office.

SOUND: *Drawer closed.*

ADA: Thanks. Don't change the subject. What did you

get married for, anyway? Way you have to work, you probably don't see your family except on Sundays.

JOHNSON: I like it, though. Kinda nice. You ought to try it, Ada.

ADA: Hah! See the papers this morning?

JOHNSON: No. I had to rush out to get the seven-forty. Didn't have time.

ADA: The market dropped again.

JOHNSON: That's not news.

ADA: Well, maybe. But I won't be surprised if the worst happens. Unlike you, my optimistic friend, I know what handwriting looks like—especially on a wall.

JOHNSON: Now where did you get that idea from? Must have been reading the Sunday supplements again. (*Grunts.*) Now you've made me miss my count.

ADA: All right for you to talk, Johnson. But there'll be heads falling around this office any day now, mark my words.

JOHNSON: Look, Ada. Be cheerful now, can't you? We've been working here for five years . . . the both of us. Where do you think the old man will get off, firing us now? He needs us!

ADA: In the first place, sentiment won't worry the old man. He's got all the sentiment of a ticker-tape machine. And in the second place, he's got three times the staff he needs to handle the business he's getting nowadays. Add that up on your machine!

VOICE 1: (*Slightly off mike.*) Say, Johnson . . . the boss wants to see you!

MUSIC: *Sting and under, then build rapidly with the voices.*

BIZ: *The following voices should be those of men and women, in different perspectives or filters. They should be distinctly unnatural; and build rapidly to Ada's line.*

VOICE 2: The boss wants to see you.

VOICE 3: The boss wants to see you.

VOICE 4: The boss wants to see you.

- VOICE 1: The boss wants to see you.
- VOICE 2: The boss wants to see you.
- ADA: (*Filter, mockingly, topping last line.*) So long, Johnson?
- MUSIC: *Mocks "So long, Johnson," cuts out quickly with door opening.*
- SOUND: *Doors opens and closes loudly.*
- JOHNSON: (*Pause.*) Good morning, sir.
- BOSS: (*Dead monotone: perfectly mechanical; distorted.*) Good morning, Johnson. Sit down, please.
- JOHNSON: Thank you.
- BOSS: You have been with us five years, haven't you?
- JOHNSON: That's right, sir.
- BOSS: I am sorry, Johnson, but due to bad business conditions we are greatly overstaffed. We shall have to let you go.
- JOHNSON: But what have I . . . ?
- BOSS: (*Exactly the same tones.*) I am sorry, Johnson, but due to bad business conditions we are greatly overstaffed. We shall have to let you go.
- JOHNSON: What am I going to do?
- BOSS: (*Mechanical—slight filter.*) I am sorry, Johnson, but due to bad business conditions we are greatly overstaffed. We shall have to let you go.
- JOHNSON: Look . . . I've got a wife and two children, and I'm living on my salary. I can't find another job now. What am I going to do?
- BOSS: (*Mechanical—more filter.*) I am sorry, Johnson, but due to bad business conditions we are greatly overstaffed. We shall have to let you go.
- JOHNSON: (*Beaten.*) I guess . . . that's all there is to it, then.
- BOSS: (*Regular mike—still mechanical.*) Good morning, Mr.

Johnson. (*Pause.*) Good morning, Mr. Johnson.
 (*Pause.*) Good morning, Mr. Johnson.

MUSIC: *Bridge.*

JOHNSON: (*Very tired.*) Better go to bed, Helen. It must be nearly morning.

HELEN: (*Cheering him.*) Is it? I don't care.

JOHNSON: Yes... it's getting a little grey in the east. I can see it... through the light wires. (*Bitterly.*) This is a rotten way of living I've given you, Helen. If you want to watch the sun come up, you have to do it from behind a telephone pole or garbage can!

HELEN: (*Soothingly.*) You're tired, Jimmy. You'll feel much better tomorrow. After all, we didn't expect very much except to be together. At least, I didn't.

JOHNSON: You should have! You ought to have some decent clothes and spend a month without worrying about bills... (*Pause.*) I guess things don't happen that way, do they? At least, not for us...

HELEN: Why should they? We're not that important. If anything happened to us, nobody would know the difference... except maybe a few of our friends. We don't do any of the big things that people notice.

JOHNSON: Yes, but they all come to us when they want something. Man in the street, that's me! The eternal sucker!

HELEN: Don't be silly, Jimmy. We'll get through, some way.

JOHNSON: But how? What are we going to do? No money... and heaven knows where the jobs are! We can't stick it out, I tell you! We'll be even worse off than we...

HELEN: We'll manage. I gave up sables, the first date I had with you... (*She yawns.*) Oooh! I'm getting sleepy. Do you remember that, Jimmy? We went to the freshman dance together...

JOHNSON: Sure I remember it. But you'd better go to bed, Helen.

HELEN: No. I want to stay here. (*Sleepily.*) Do you remember the dance?

JOHNSON: Of course. Here . . . lie down on the couch, then. I'll cover you up. . . .

HELEN: When we came home I asked you in and we sat down on the sofa. You looked so funny, Jimmy . . . so funny . . . I think you wanted to kiss me, didn't you?

JOHNSON: That's right. (*Softly.*) And I was scared and got right up and went home. You must have thought I was crazy.

HELEN: No . . . I thought you were nice. You looked so funny and nice. . . . That was when I decided to marry you. Good night, Jimmy. Get some sleep soon. Good . . . night.

MUSIC: *Sneak in very softly in back.*

JOHNSON: Good night . . . I . . . guess I'm a little tired myself. Can't go to sleep, though. Must think . . . where did I put those papers? Oh Lord, I'm tired. Papers. Here they are . . . bank book, insurance policy. . . .

MUSIC: *Up briefly then under.*

NARRATOR: Slowly he lifted his head, and turned to face the window, so that his bloodshot eyes saw the red glow of the dawn stepped up to daylight glare. Fingers fumbled for light switch. Words formed in his mind, as though on a blank white screen . . .

JOHNSON: I—won't—need—lights—now.

NARRATOR: The words blurred and faded, leaving the mind-screen blank; he stood staring out of the window, not seeing pencil-thin light wires, nor trees with black, twisted limbs, nor the meaningless sky-changes of day.

MUSIC: *Out.*

ORATOR: These are the ways of men, and past understanding; for five years, or ten, or twenty, they race like rats through a maze of work-for-food, food-for-strength, strength-for-work and at the end of the maze, they die.

NARRATOR: His eyes focussed then on his wife's hand, slim and white, which dangled from the couch. . . .

- ORATOR: What a thing to twist the heart is the loved hand, motionless. . . .
- NARRATOR: And while he watched, the hand itself became a figure and shape of death; for the smooth flesh disappeared, so that the bones of the hand gouged the loose and wrinkled skin . . . And he thought . . .
- JOHNSON: There is nothing else, not in this world or any other. I can't watch her grow hungry . . . the pain in her eyes . . . the little bones becoming gaunt and plain under the white skin. . . . If I die there will be money. . . .
- NARRATOR: His hand brushed the insurance policy. The clattering fragments of thought tumbled through his head; when next he remembered himself, he was tired with a dull, leaden tiredness. Softly (he would not awaken her, for she had fallen asleep, uneasy and restless, at dawn) he walked out into the street. . . .
- SOUND: *Door closes softly.*
- HELEN: (*In her sleep.*) Jimmy . . . we'll manage, Jimmy. Get . . . some . . . sleep . . . now. . . .
- MUSIC: *Up for transition, then under.*
- ORATOR: He stood at the gates of the city at dawn, watched the long blade of the street taper into infinity. Have you seen that? Have you watched the tall towers swaying to the music of the morning-song of clattering milk cans and roaring trucks, and the slap of morning papers against cold sidewalk?
- MUSIC: *Up from under to sharp conclusion.*
- BUSINESS: *Newsboy in background—fades out during next three speeches.*
- VOICE 1: That's Little Joe: twelve years on the same corner and everybody likes him and used to give him a nickel for a two-cent paper; but not any more.
- VOICE 2: It is not easy to live that way.
- VOICE 3: It's not easy to live any way: so you stay on your

corner and yell your lungs out about love-nests and wars and murders, and live on a quarter of a cent profit. What's the difference? You live so many years, and then you die.

ORATOR: And have you seen the sad-eyed bartender, standing in the doorway of the Happy Hour Club (of which the windows are darkened from within) smelling the fresh air?

BARTENDER: It's like this: six months more, that's all. Just six months, Bacardis. Maybe-you'd-better-have-some-coffee-sir. Yes-sir-Mr.-McMahon-the-regular. Sure it's the regular, you lousy soak. No-your-husband's-not-here. Scotch-and-soda. Sometimes I think if I have to smell Scotch just once again, I'll go nuts. But six months. I can stand it for that long. But then there will be clean air like this all the time . . . maybe cleaner, how do I know? I never smelled it . . . and the green hills and maybe chickens and no more Scotch and soda.

ORATOR: And the deities of the city, the proud angelic beings who walk arrogantly in the gaudy bars and the great luxurious hotels; do you know them, their appearance to mortal eyes? They are dreaming now; caressed by soft silk they are dreaming in the penthouses, behind the blank staring windows of hotels; dreaming easily no doubt of yachts and Charvet shirts and champagne and the Ritz-Carlton. These are words formed in the tongues of angels, not intelligible to men.

NARRATOR: All these things he saw and heard, when his steps had dragged slowly from that place where his wife stirred uneasily in her sleep (and the dark hair like a still flame on the pillow).

ORATOR: And he saw, too, the breadline: the unholy monster of great length and many heads and feet, formed of creatures having the shape and speech of men, winding over the length of a city block, facing a sign.

SOUND: *Low crowd sound, occasional traffic noise.*

DUTCH: Free soup. I wonder how much soup they got.

- BABE: Not enough. There ain't enough soup in the world to make me quit feelin' like an empty sack.
- DUTCH: Well, whose fault is it? What makes you dames wanta hit the road. . . .
- BABE: Shut up! You don't think I wanted to, do you?
- DOC: I've always been curious about that. Why did you?
- BABE: Think I'm goin' to take down my hair for you?
- JOE: Let her alone! This being hungry . . . I don't like neither.
- DOC: A cavalier . . . and you'd never guess it by the size of his feet.
- JOE: You shut up! You think you are funny, huh? I tell you I am hungry and cold and I don't feel so funny. I have good job in mills—make good steel. Then they tell me, no job. Go stand in breadline. Sleep in parks—if the cops let you. I say I don't like this. I don't laugh. Maybe after while I don't laugh so much I kill somebody. . . .
- BABE: Come on, Joe. You don't wanta kill nobody. I know how you feel, but you don't want to kill nobody.
- JOE: This guy makes jokes about you. . . .
- BABE: Doc's all right. He just talks too much, that's all.
- JOE: All right. I say nothin'. Nothin' at all. I keep my big mouth shut. Big dumb Polack, that's me.
- DUTCH: Sure, it ain't perlite to ask questions, Doc. The lady ain't feelin' so hot this mornin'. Too much champagne last night, maybe.
- BABE: Too much fresh air, you mean. Geez, it was cold last night.
- DUTCH: It ain't the cold, it's the frigidity.
- DOC: An epigram on an empty stomach. Dutch, I congratulate you.
- DUTCH: Is it my fault I was born funny instead of rich?

BABE: For God's sake, will you two shut up? I got the shakes. I gotta get somethin' to eat, or I'll get 'em good.

DUTCH: You ain't got 'em as bad as that guy.

DOC: Where?

DUTCH: Over there . . . tryin' to sneak up on the line. (*Calls.*) Hey you! Get in line if you want soup. Whaddy think you are, Duke?

DOC: No, quiet, Dutch. There's something wrong with him.

DUTCH: There's somethin' wrong with all of us. (*Calls.*) I said get in line, Duke.

JOHNSON: (*Dully.*) I don't want any soup.

DOC: It wouldn't do any harm. This isn't a morning for shirt sleeves exactly.

JOHNSON: I'm not cold.

DOC: I think Dutch won't object if we make a place for you in the line. (*Pause.*) Introductions are now in order. This is Dutch, the silent citizen, here is Joe, this is Babe, and my name is Doc—once physician extraordinary to Mike Antonetti, until someone put too many bullets in him for me to remove. Now a free lance. And you?

JOHNSON: You're a doctor?

DOC: Yes.

JOHNSON: If you wanted to die, how would you do it?

DUTCH: (*Whistles.*)

DOC: An unusual question. Now, let me see . . . if I were a layman . . .

BABE: (*Sharply.*) I'll tell you how to do it, brother. I've had it all figured out for quite a while now. Just pick out the closest express lane and walk out in front of a car. If that don't work, then climb a nice tall building and pretend you're a broker. You can't miss.

DOC: Now see here. . . .

- JOHNSON: Thanks. (*Pause.*) Thanks.
- DOC: But you can't go off. . . .
- DUTCH: Let the guy alone, Doc. Maybe he knows what he's doin', an' we can't afford to miss the soup.
- SOUND: *Slam of soup window.*
- VOICE: (*Off.*) That's all boys. No more soup today.
- BABE: (*Slowly.*) Looks like we missed it. (*Calls.*) Hey, you! Duke!
- JOHNSON: (*Off.*) Yes?
- BABE: I'll be seein' you!
- SOUND: *Crowd up then under.*
- ORATOR: The monster disintegrating, shuffling in a hundred sections to the stews and dives, the wharfs and parks and garbage cans of the great city. This he saw: and smiled that after one swift instant he should not ever again be troubled with visions of angels and monsters.
- SOUND: *Out.*
- NARRATOR: He turned and so faced again the long blade of concrete. And over the blade now moved many creatures formed out of steel in strange, intricate patterns: and he saw in them—moving swiftly, relentlessly, terribly—the shape and figure of death.
- SOUND: *Street noises and cars in.*
- VOICE: The night is over and gone, and the dawn is past: it is time to die.
- ORATOR: This is no death for a man: the rending crash of steel on flesh, the long grinding thrust of steel rod through bone and bowels. A man should die cleanly, at the hands of the good enemy, with malice aforethought: not casually, because of the slow nerves and the sluggish brain. If a man die, he should die well and for cause, lest death itself be cheapened, as life is cheapened. . . .
- NARRATOR: So he stepped from the curb into the street and moved sightlessly out into the middle.

SOUND: *Street noises fade into the roar of a single motor, high and fast: motor approaches: scream of brakes. Woman's scream. Crowd up.*

DRIVER: (Off.) Hey, ya dope, where do you think yer goin'? Walk right in front a man's car! I gotta good notion to calla cops.

MUSIC: *Stings, then under.*

NARRATOR: He did not hear the words, or know that anyone had spoken.

ORATOR: The deep, hot shame and the bitter indignation, that a man should offer the last prize of his body, and be refused.

BABE: (*Close on: filtered whisper.*) Just pick out the closest express lane and walk in front of a car. If that doesn't work, then climb a nice tall building and pretend you're a broker.

JOHNSON: (*Slow fade.*) Nice tall building . . . pretend you're a broker . . . nice tall building . . .

MUSIC: *Up full for short bridge and then under.*

NARRATOR: He found himself in a high tower, in one of those too-tall monuments to the pride of peasant-kings: and peering over he saw as one peering from the moon might see, the myriad insect-swarm, the racing robots, the pattern of the city herd.

ORATOR: The tower swayed slowly and mysteriously in intricate dirge-measure: and his body cried out for the touch of man—the insect crying to insect. And a voice . . .

MUSIC: *Up to a strong chord and out.*

INTERNE: I wouldn't get too close if I were you, Mister. It gives you ideas.

JOHNSON: Where did you come from?

INTERNE: I . . . why, I've been up here. I expect that seems funny to you.

JOHNSON: No. It doesn't.

- INTERNE: You don't look as if anything ever seemed funny to you. If you looked a little better fed and a little less honest, I'd be able to guess why you came up here. (*Pause.*) (*Rather rapidly.*) It ought to seem funny to you, though, and that's why I'm going to tell you about it. I'm an interne, see? In that black patch over yonder . . . slum area. Come over here, away from that parapet—you can see it better from here. Sure, there's a hospital over there, in case you thought of asking. And lots of business for it, too. Everything from small-pox to bullet holes, if you see what I mean. Do you?
- JOHNSON: I'm sorry. I wasn't listening to you. I thought I could hear music.
- INTERNE: Music? Not much music up here. . . . But anyway, I was telling you. I patch those poor devils for eighteen hours a day most of the time, and believe me, after you do that for a while, you don't have much feeling for humanity. They get so they look like a bunch of diseases . . . mistakes . . . sore spots on creation. You see what I mean?
- JOHNSON: Yes . . . I think so.
- INTERNE: That's good. That's fine. Be careful of that rail—it's a bit shaky. So I come up here when I have a couple of hours off. You're too far away from the ant heap down there to see what's wrong with them, and that helps a lot. They're even beautiful from up here. They look like a kaleidoscope.
- JOHNSON: Yes.
- INTERNE: Only you don't want to get too near the edge. It makes you dizzy, and maybe you get to like that. Let's go down now. I'll buy you a drink somewhere.
- JOHNSON: No. I like it here. It doesn't make me dizzy. Watch!
- MUSIC: *Stings very sharp and vibrant behind.*
- INTERNE: (*Without break.*) Hey! Get down from there!
- NARRATOR: His feet mounted to the high railing, and his body swayed with the tower to the dirge music: so he heard

the music of men, and of the machines that destroy men, and of the skies.

ORATOR: His feet crept closer to the edge (for his body was braced for the long sweet plunge, the warm dark unconsciousness when the mind is at last alone). And he slipped, and fell. . . .

MUSIC: *Up sharply and out.*

NARRATOR: But strong arms like steel cable were wrapped about him, and the muscles tautened and cracked, and he was lying on the roof of the silent and motionless tower.

INTERNE: You can't do that here, Mister. They only let stock-brokers jump off here.

MUSIC: *In under.*

ORATOR: This is the last degradation: to attempt a chill death uncourageously and in despair, and to be refused. To cry out for death until the screaming nerves are taut with demand for the long cold rest and the long dark silence, and to be refused. This is the last degradation.

NARRATOR: The slow, stumbling feet, and the long, endless streets. . . .

VOICE 1: Fire sale today.

VOICE 2: Going out of business.

VOICE 3: El Teatro Espagnol.

VOICE 4: Whiskey ten cents, wine a nickel.

MUSIC: *Up and out.*

NARRATOR: Figures blocked his way, and for a moment he became aware of the world about him. He saw: blue-coated policeman, stick-swinging . . . suspiciously eyed by dark, sullen men . . . touring car idling before doors of marble and steel. . . .

SOUND: *Car idling close. Street noises in BG.*

GANGSTER

ONE: (*Softly.*) Copper.

GANGSTER

TWO: Just at the wrong time, too.

GANGSTER

ONE: Wrong time for him, baby. If Ric comes out now. . . .

GANGSTER

TWO: Keep your shirt on. Not yet. . . .

GANGSTER

ONE: I tell ya. . . .

GANGSTER

TWO: Shut up! Keep your foot on the gas.

SOUND: *Street noises up then down for . . .*

COP: Hey buddy . . . hey, you!

JOHNSON: Yes . . . yes, officer?

COP: What're ya doin' down here, buddy? Walkin' around in your shirt sleeves?

JOHNSON: Nothing. That is . . . I'm just walking. That's all right, isn't it?

COP: Yeah, but . . .

VOICE 2: Hey, look . . . a pinch.

MAMIE: (*Off.*) Wonder what the poor little guy done?

COP: Beat it! Break it up now. This ain't no pinch.

MAMIE: Well, ya don't have to get stuffy about it.

COP: G'wan. Look, buddy, you got a place to go?

JOHNSON: Well, I . . .

SOUND: *Shot off mike.*

COP: Hey, what the . . .

VOICE 2: A bank stick-up! Somebody's robbin' the bank. Here he comes!

COP: (*To Johnson.*) Watch out, buddy. (*Calls.*) Pull up there, you!RIC: (*Off.*) Get outa my way, copper.SOUND: *Machine gun fire, scream.*

- VOICE 2: He's gotta machine gun. He got the cop. Watch out!
- SOUND: *Yells. Growing crowd confusion, down.*
- VOICE 3: Lookit the little guy. He's got the cop's gun.
- VOICE 4: Put that thing down, fella. You'll get killed. You'll get . . .
- JOHNSON: (*Exultant.*) This is how I wanted to die. This is it. (*Calls.*) You. You in that car! Watch this!
- SOUND: *Shot and a man's scream.*
- GANGSTER
ONE: (*Off.*) Ric! Ric! I'm hurt. Get him, Ric!
- SOUND: *Another shot.*
- RIC: Watch me, baby!
- SOUND: *Machine gun burst, woman screams; car roars away, crowd in close, hold; then a siren in distance.*
- VOICE 3: Geez, that happened quick, didn't it?
- WOMAN: Hey, Mamie. Come quick and look. Two dead guys!
- MAMIE: What happened?
- VOICE 3: Somebody stuck up a bank an' got a cop.
- MAMIE: Who's the little fella?
- VOICE 3: Him? Oh, he got in the way, I guess. Tried to pick up the cop's gun.
- WOMAN: (*Amazed.*) Can you imagine . . . ?
- VOICE 3: Yeah. I seen him. The guy was screwy. You'd a thought he wanted to get plugged.
- MAMIE: Gee, but he had a nerve. He just walked into it, huh?
- VOICE 3: That's about it. An innocent bystander.
- MUSIC: *In softly in background, start building.*
- NARRATOR: James Johnson, innocent bystander.
- VOICE: So long, Johnson!
- MUSIC: *Up full then under.*
- ORATOR: What is death? . . . One floats softly, in a silent mist

that lifts always upward; and the mist turns from the blindfold blackness of death to an indescribable color, compounded of softness and those shades too delicate to be distinguished by living eyes. There are no figures of death: not figures of things present, or past, or to come. Only the slow shift of the mist.

MUSIC: *Up full then under the following speech fading out as it ends.*

NARRATOR: Yes, but the mist clears and the colors fade: and as the mind forgets the warm touch of the earth, so it now abandons the soft cold caresses of death. There are sounds again, and the dim outline of things. This is heaven, or hell, or earth again.

INTERNE: (*Slow fade on.*) Oh yes, he'll live all right. Touch and go, of course. The bullet scraped his skull badly. A hair's difference, and he wouldn't... Rather a surprising thing; amazing amount of calcium in his bones. (*Pause.*) Coming to, is he?

JOHNSON: I thought... I... was...

INTERNE: You almost were, brother. I was just saying it's lucky you've got a thick head. First you try to step off a fifty-story building and then you walk into a machine gun. You can take it.

JOHNSON: Yes.

INTERNE: Your wife's here. Want to see her?

JOHNSON: (*Quickly.*) Helen?

INTERNE: Sure. (*Pause.*) Not very long, Mrs. Johnson. We'll have to take it a little easy.

HELEN: Hello, Jimmy.

JOHNSON: Helen... I... (*Pause.*) This isn't very good, Helen. Bad enough if I'd managed to... seems I'm not even very much good at dying.

HELEN: I didn't want you to be.

JOHNSON: I know. But what else...?

- HELEN: I told you we weren't the sort of people who do big, spectacular things. It doesn't work.
- JOHNSON: I guess you're right. I guess we'll just have to plod along, same as usual.
- INTERNE: Plod along nothing! Wait till the newspaper boys get this yarn. They'll make a hero out of you in two shakes!
- JOHNSON: No . . . I wouldn't want that. If they ask, tell them I was just some clumsy guy that got hurt by accident, and you don't know my name.
- INTERNE: But you need a job . . .
- JOHNSON: I'll get a job. Sure I'll get a job . . . and some day maybe we'll laugh at all this: the breadlines and the funny speeches and the stockmarket—and say, "Weren't we fools to worry about it?" (*Sighs.*) I'm kinda tired now. Too much excitement for one day, I guess. I'll be home soon, Helen. No sables or yachts or custom-tailored suits, but . . .
- HELEN: We'll get along. Go to sleep, darling. Go to sleep.
- MUSIC: *Up to conclusion.*

The scenes

ACTION AND REACTION

See page 198

FROM *The Guardsman*, by Ferenc Molnar. Radio adaptation by Arthur Miller from the translation by Grace I. Colbron and Hans Bartsch

Franz and Marie were married at the height of their fame as celebrated stars of the Vienna stage. They lived happily—for a while. Then Franz gets the idea that Marie is yearning for different pastures. To test her, he sends her flowers with which he encloses a card bearing the fictitious name of Wassily Samsonov. Bernhardt, a critic "friend of the family," is present as the maid brings in the current bouquet.

- LIESL: (Off mike.) Excuse me, Ma'am, these came for you.
- MARIE: Oh, what beautiful flowers! Was there any message?
- LIESL: (Off mike.) No, Ma'am.
- BERNHARDT: Who could have sent them?
- FRANZ: I don't ask questions any more, Bernhardt. She gets flowers all the time. This isn't the first by any means—Oh, no, my dear friend! Marie, darling . . . what is that you just took off that rose?
- MARIE: What is what?
- FRANZ: The envelope you found containing your admirer's card, with the declaration of his love. Give me that envelope!

- MARIE: There was no envelope in the flowers.
- FRANZ: There was. Give it to me at once.
- MARIE: I will not.
- FRANZ: I command you to give it to me.
- BERNHARDT: Now Franz. . . .
- FRANZ: I want to know who the man is who expresses his admiration in red roses. This is the tenth bouquet at least—admiration has its limits!
- MARIE: I will not give it to you.
- FRANZ: Bernhardt, see her eyes flash! Look at her! She thinks she'll get out of it that way. I command you to give me that letter! Don't walk away from me, Marie!
- MARIE: You are right. There was a letter. But I will not give it to you. Yes, I know what name is on that card—but I will not tell it to you. Yes, the man who sent those flowers does admire me, does appreciate me, does love me, but I will not give you the letter. Now then.
- SOUND: *Choppy heels on floor. Door slamming.*
- FRANZ: Bernhardt . . . Spring has come!
- BERNHARDT: Yes, Franz. Let's take a walk in the park.

ADDRESSING AN AUDIENCE

See page 264

FROM *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, by Stephen Vincent Benét,*
adapted for radio by Charles Jackson

Jabez Stone, having a streak of hard luck on his farm, sells his soul to the devil in exchange for the promise of a change of luck for the next seven years. The devil keeps his word, and Jabez becomes the most successful farmer for miles around. At the end of seven years, the devil comes to demand his payment, but Jabez calls on Daniel Webster to act as his lawyer. The jury, assembled from Hades by Scratch, the devil, is composed of the bloodiest traitors and renegades in history, and thus indisposed toward the

* From "The Devil and Daniel Webster," in *Selected Works of Stephen Vincent Benét*, published by Rinehart & Co., Inc. Copyright, 1936, by Stephen Vincent Benét.

defendant, Jabez. Nevertheless, Webster, the master orator, has agreed to go ahead and try the case. He has done so, and is now engaged in his closing statement to the jury.

WEBSTER: (*After a pause and with quiet dignity.*) I would like to say a few words, your honor—not for the sake of neighbor Stone, nor for my own sake—no, nor in argument or reply to Scratch here; but merely because the night seems good to me. Gentlemen, can you remember—recently for some of you, far, far, back for others—can you remember the freshness of a fine morning when you were young, and the taste of food when you were hungry, and the new day that’s every day when you’re a child? I’d like to feel these things again—and so, too, I think, would you. They are good things for any man. But without freedom, they sicken. Slavery—the loss of your soul—how the very thought revolts the heart! (*Slowly the speech begins to fade until we no longer hear Daniel Webster—indicating a long passage of time in which he continues Jabez’ defense. Slowly the speech fades back. Daniel is still talking.*) “Who is here so base that would be a bondman? If any, speak; for him have I offended.” You’ve heard those words before? Yes, even in hell, if a man was a man, you’d know it. But because we forget this, sorrows, failures, meanesses, loneliness, persecutions, beset him along the endless journey of mankind. He gets tricked and trapped and bamboozled all along the way, but it is a great journey. And no devil that was ever sired can know the inwardness of it. It takes a man to do that.

I wish sometimes that I were clairvoyant, gentlemen. I would like to be able to put myself inside each man here, and feel what part of the past, and what native ground, that man loves and clings to. But whatever it is, it is a part of your life—no man else’s—*your* life that was dear to you and that was lived as *you* cared to live it. You could rush headlong into destruction if you chose, or till the field in bland contentment. Good or bad, your life was dear to you. Why? Because your *soul* was your *own*, and nobody was its master but yourself.

It seems we have been talking about the soul a great deal tonight, gentlemen. But not much, not really much,

when you consider some things. For instance, I think it is a significant fact that the poet Shakespeare mentions the *body* two hundred and forty-one times, whereas he alludes to the *soul* five hundred and forty-one times. In other words, the word *soul* occurs in Shakespeare's plays exactly three hundred times more than the word *body*, or more than twice as often.

Furthermore, when the good bard does mention the body, it is nearly always a dead body he is referring to . . . whereas the soul—the *soul*, gentlemen . . . do I, or Shakespeare, need to remind you how *living* the soul is, how eternally alive! The very words “immortal” and “soul” go together. *O my immortal soul!*

Or, to leave the realm of literature for a moment and come back to earth where we belong, what about this, gentlemen; when we hear our good New Hampshire housewife exclaim: “Oh, my soul and body!” Which one of the two does she mention first? And why? (*Pause of about four seconds . . . complete silence. Gradually he builds to his great climax.*) Gentlemen, I don't care what you or anyone else might wish to do with neighbor Stone's life, but whatever you do, you cannot harm, you cannot *touch*, his soul. Even *death* cannot do what Mr. Scratch here presumes to do tonight. Say what you will, the soul shall be triumphant.

“Imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay,

Might stop a hole to keep the wind away. . . .”

But his soul, gentlemen . . . his *soul!* ranges the world, as long as the world shall last, or time itself, or *your immortal souls!*

ADDRESSING AN AUDIENCE

See page 264

FROM *Red Death*, by Ruth Barth

Dr. Goldberger, a quiet but courageous doctor, has been risking his life and that of his wife in trying to find the cure for pellagra—the red scourge. He believes that he has found the answer, and has obtained the permission of the governor of one of the southern states to make a controlled experiment on convicts in the state penitentiary if they will agree to the risk. The convicts have been sent for by the warden and are just entering the office.

- WARDEN: (*Off.*) Good. Bring them in. Just stand over here with those other men. (*Coming in.*) Now, men, I want you to meet Doctor Goldberger, who's here by special permission of the Governor. Doctor Goldberger is your warden from now on. (*Murmurs, stir.*) I'll let you tell them, Doctor.
- GOLDBERGER: Well, men, I'm not your warden yet. That's up to you. I'll tell you the good part of it first. If you accept, the Governor will grant you each a pardon. (*Violent ad lib reactions.*)
- JOE: What'd I tell you. The Governor *did* pardon us!
- SAM: You hush up, boy. They's a catch in this somewhere. You can depend on it.
- GOLDBERGER: You're right. There is a catch in it. (*Stir.*) You will have to do just as I tell you. You will live in new bunk-houses—you've probably already seen them on the grounds.
- CHIMP: They ain't even any bars on the windows!
- WARDEN: There's still the wall on the guardhouse. Don't forget that.
- GOLDBERGER: Well, the place is clean, and you'll be expected to keep it that way. There won't be any more work in the shops for any of you. (*Cheers.*)
- STEVE: What about the grub?
- CHIMP: Yeah, where's the catch?
- GOLDBERGER: I'm coming to that. You'll get corn bread, molasses, grits, side-pork—and several other things. There'll be plenty to eat. You can stuff yourselves; I want you to.
- STEVE: Well, what are we waiting for?
- GOLDBERGER: Not so fast. I still haven't come to the catch. And here it is. It is very possible that you will all contract a disease—pellagra. (*Ad libs.*) You're familiar with the disease?
- SAM: Excuse me, Doctor, sir. But I know what the pellagra misery is. I seen my little sister die of it. Doctor, why you want to give anyone that kind of misery?

- GOLDBERGER: Because if you men do contract pellagra, we will know how to cure others who have it.
- JOE: I ain't goin' to get that Red misery for nobody! (*Ad lib "me neither's."*)
- CHIMP: Aw, shut up. You all want to get out of this stir, don't you? And maybe we won't catch it. Even the doc ain't sure.
- STEVE: It's worth a chance.
- BUCK: I'll go, doc. (*Several ad lib "me too's."*)
- SAM: Doctor, you sure you can cure us up again if'n we catch it?
- GOLDBERGER: I'm reasonably sure.
- SAM: And we really get all the side-pork and corn bread we can eat?
- GOLDBERGER: That's right.
- SAM: Then me and Joe here is with you, Doctor. And you tell the Governor he can start gettin' ready with them pardons.
- MUSIC: *Up, down, and out.*

BUILDING INTENSITY

See page 234

FROM *The Silver Cord*, by Sidney Howard. Radio adaptation
by Erik Barnouw

When David Phelps brings his new wife home, it does not take Christina long to discover that her mother-in-law is a possessive mother who is unwilling to have her sons leave her side. Mrs. Phelps succeeds in breaking up the engagement between Rob (David's brother) and Hester. Now, Chris is convinced that Mrs. Phelps is trying to break up her marriage and determines to force a showdown.

- DAVID: Chris! What are you doing with the suitcases?
- CHRIS: (*Fading in.*) I've been packing. I'm going away with Hester. Are you coming?
- DAVID: (*Staggered.*) Now?

CHRIS: As soon as she comes down. I came down ahead to thrash out one thing for good and all.

MRS. PHELPS: To thrash out what, Christina?

CHRIS: Whether David is going on from this point as your son or my husband.

DAVID: Chris—you're not going to begin all that again!

CHRIS: Yes I am! Oh, I'd walk out without a word, even loving you as I do, if I thought this state of affairs made anyone in this family happy.

DAVID: What state of affairs ?

MRS. PHELPS: You might let us judge our own happiness.

CHRIS: If you had any. But you haven't. You're all trapped . . . terribly, miserably trapped!

MRS. PHELPS: What we say in anger, we sometimes regret, Christina.

CHRIS: I'm not angry now—But I mean to strip this house and show it for what it is.

MRS. PHELPS: (*Turning for help.*) Dave, I—

CHRIS: I mean to show you up, Mrs. Phelps! Then Dave can use his judgment.

DAVID: Chris! For heaven's sake. Can't I be both a good son and a good husband?

CHRIS: Not if your mother knows it, you can't!

MRS. PHELPS: If you'll excuse me, I will not stay to be insulted.

CHRIS: You'll lose him if you don't stay! . . . Oh, I know all about the legend of yourself as a great woman you've built up for thirty years for your sons to worship. But it hasn't taken me long to see that you're not fit to be anyone's mother!

DAVID: Chris, see here now. . . .

MRS. PHELPS: Let her go on! She will explain that or retract!

CHRIS: Mrs. Phelps, why do you resent that I'm going to have a baby . . . David's baby. . . .

MRS. PHELPS: I do not resent it.

CHRIS: And why did you bend every effort to separate Hester and Rob?

MRS. PHELPS: I did nothing of the sort!

CHRIS: Can you deny that your one idea is to keep your sons dependent on you?

MRS. PHELPS: I deny it all!

CHRIS: You may deny it till you're black in the face, but it's true. You belong to a type only too common, Mrs. Phelps... a type of self-centered, self-pitying, son-devouring mother.

DAVID: Chris!

MRS. PHELPS: Really, I—

CHRIS: Oh, there are normal mothers around; mothers who want their children to be men and women and take care of themselves; mothers who are people, too; who can look on their children as people and don't forever have to be holding on to them and tucking them up like everlasting babies. But you're not one of the normal ones, Mrs. Phelps!

DAVID: Chris! Please—I—

CHRIS: Look what you've done to your sons; you've destroyed Rob. You've swallowed him up until there's nothing left of him. Your crowning achievement was to make him unfit for military service—nothing wrong, just the nervous type. And Dave. You'd have swallowed him up too, if the war hadn't given him his chance to escape your clutches. And to think that some people actually admire your kind—you professional mothers!

MRS. PHELPS: I hope David sees the sordidness, the nastiness you offer him for his life. What can you offer David?

CHRIS: A chance to be himself. A chance to share with me the raising of his child. The solace and enjoyment of my love.

MRS. PHELPS: (*Revolted.*) Ugh!

CHRIS: Can you offer so much?

MRS. PHELPS: I offer a mother's love! Which you scoff at!

CHRIS: Not within bounds. I hope my baby loves me. I know I'll love my baby. But if David lets me down, I hope I never turn to my children, as you did, Mrs. Phelps, for the romantic satisfaction I missed.

MRS. PHELPS: David, really—

CHRIS: *Why* did she separate us last night, David? Because she couldn't bear the thought of our being together!

DAVID: Chris, for heaven's sake—

CHRIS: And she couldn't bear that because, to this day, she refuses to believe that you're a grown man capable of desiring a woman!

DAVID: Chris!

MRS. PHELPS: No, no!

CHRIS: You find that revolting? . . . It is! . . . I can't wait any longer for your answer, Dave.

DAVID: Chris, please! Can't we calm down for a minute, and—

CHRIS: Is that your answer? Remember me, won't you, on Mother's Day!

BUILDING MOOD

See page 196

FROM *On Borrowed Time*. Original play by Paul Osborn,
based on the novel by Lawrence Edward Watkin.

Radio adaptation by Paul Peters

The announcer's introduction to Act III as given below sets the scene. Pilbeam is "Gramps" Northrup's lawyer, and Evans is his doctor.

ANNOUNCER: So great is Julian Northrup's love for his grandson Pud that he even succeeds in evading the dark visitor who some day comes to summon every mortal man. By ruse and by a miraculous power of his own, Julian imprisons Mr. Brink in an apple tree. The neighbors, of course,

believe that the old man has lost his mind and should be removed to an asylum; and at last, in desperation, Julian has been forced to test his triumph over Death by shooting a man point-blank.

EVANS: I've asked you to drop into my office this morning, Pilbeam, because something's happened that will turn the world upside down—unless we stop it.

PILBEAM: You mean, Northrup?

EVANS: He shot Grimes last night. Shot him three times in the abdomen. Grimes had internal hemorrhages and it was an hour before I could get him to the hospital.

PILBEAM: What'd he shoot him for?

EVANS: He was experimenting.

PILBEAM: Experimenting! You mean he killed a man just to—

EVANS: He didn't kill him. *According to everything I know about medicine*, Grimes should have died. But he didn't. By some miracle he's still alive!

PILBEAM: That's funny.

EVANS: Funnier than you think, Pilbeam. I've been up all night trying to kill something. I've experimented with everything I could lay my hands on. Insects—bugs—stray cats—every dog I found. I couldn't kill a single thing. Nothing—except a mouse. *And you know how I killed it?* I tied it to the end of a fishing pole and touched it up against that apple tree.

PILBEAM: Good Lord! You mean what Northrup said about Mr. Brink was true?

EVANS: All I know is that the old man is not crazy. I've asked him to come here, too. Ought to be along any minute now.

PILBEAM: What are you going to do?

EVANS: I don't know. But if there is anything up in that tree, *it's got to come down*. It's got to come down.

CALLING

See page 258

FROM *Payment Deferred*. Original play by Jeffrey Dell,
based on the novel by C. S. Forester. Radio
adaptation by Gerald Holland

William Marble, an English bank clerk in desperate financial straits, has killed his nephew for the money he carried with him and buried his body in the garden of his (Marble's) house. Marble invests the money, makes a killing in the stock market, and retires. When his wife and daughter go on a vacation, he takes as mistress Madame Collins, a French dressmaker, but he cannot rid himself of the haunting dread that his secret in the garden will be discovered.

MADAME: Should I not turn on the lights?

WILL: It's much nicer like this.

MADAME: Eh bien, mon cheri . . . What are you thinking about?

WILL: Eh? Oh, nothing in particular.

MADAME: But you must be. You have been just standing there—staring out the window. Is there something so interesting in the garden?

WILL: (*Quickly.*) What do you mean?

MADAME: My goodness—I don't mean anything—I just wondered why you were so quiet.

WILL: I suppose I have been thinking. They'll be home tomorrow. Our last evening.

MADAME: You have missed them very much?

WILL: You know I haven't, Rita. These three weeks have been—wonderful. Rita, you don't know what it's meant—you coming in like this. At times I've almost managed to forget.

MADAME: That you have a wife?

WILL: No—not that.

MADAME: What then?

WILL: Oh, nothing—just that I—(*Stops short.*)

SOUND: *A window flung up.*

WILL: (*Yells.*) Get out of that garden! Get out, do you hear me!
You filthy little beggar!

MADAME: What is it?

WILL: Kid from next door—chasing his ball! (*Yells.*) Get out of there!

MADAME: He won't hurt anything!

WILL: I'll show that young puppy! (*Fading.*) I'll teach him to stay off my property!

MADAME: Don't! The boy is doing no harm!

CALLING

See page 258

FROM *The Signal Man*, by Charles Dickens.

Adapted for radio by Charles Tazewell

Darkin, a reporter writing a feature series on unusual occupations, has come to interview Braxton, who mans the signal lights just outside the railroad tunnel. Living in the perpetual shadows of the dark ravine which leads up to the mouth of the tunnel, Braxton has developed, at least so he thinks, an extrasensory perception which warns him when danger approaches. He tells Darkin of the ghost which appears just before a fatal accident on the railroad line, but Darkin does not believe it. Braxton offers to show Darkin the spot where the ghost appears, and they leave the little signal house.

SOUND: *Footsteps stop.*

BRAXTON: This is the spot where I first saw him.

DARKIN: Here?

BRAXTON: No—not on the tracks. Over there to the side.

DARKIN: But that's impossible, Braxton. You couldn't see *anyone* there!

BRAXTON: But I did.

DARKIN: You couldn't. It's too dark. The rays from the lantern don't fall in that direction.

BRAXTON: Nevertheless, I saw him—plainly. This is where he always stands. He was here last night—as I told you—with his left arm flung across his face as if to shut out some terrible sight—and waving the right arm frantically . . . and calling, “Below there! Look out! Look out!”

DARKIN: And you were standing where?

BRAXTON: On the tracks—directly in front of the signal house.

DARKIN: Very well, Braxton—I’m going to prove to you that you couldn’t have seen him. I’m going to stand here on the spot you have designated—and I want you to walk down the track—

BRAXTON: Yes, sir.

DARKIN: Stop when you come to the place where you were standing last night—and then turn around and see if you can see me.

BRAXTON: Very well, sir.

SOUND: *Footsteps on gravel roadbed, going away from mike.*

DARKIN: (*Raising voice.*) I’m going to teach you to laugh at ghosts, Braxton.

BRAXTON: (*Away from mike.*) This is the place, sir.

DARKIN: Good—now turn around—

BRAXTON: Yes, sir.

DARKIN: Now—can you see me here in the shadows?

BRAXTON: (*Away.*) No, sir—I can’t.

DARKIN: Well—doesn’t that prove to you that you couldn’t have seen anyone standing here last night—or any other night?

SOUND: *A train rumble in the distance.*

BRAXTON: (*Off mike, some distance from Darkin.*) Yes, sir—I guess it does.

SOUND: *Bring up train effect louder.*

DARKIN: And if you couldn’t see the person—you couldn’t see what he was doing—you couldn’t see him wave to you—or throw one arm across his face—

BRAXTON: (*Off mike.*) No, sir.

SOUND: *The piercing whistle and the clatter of the train suddenly coming up.*

DARKIN: (*Shouting madly above din of train.*)

Braxton! . . . BRAXTON! . . . LOOK OUT! BELOW THERE! . . .
LOOK OUT!! . . . LOOK OUT!! LOOK OUT!!!

SOUND: *Rattle and rumble and shriek of train coming through the cut. . . . Sound rises to a peak—and then dims gradually away to silence as the train enters tunnel and vanishes completely.*

CASUAL BUSINESS

See page 200

FROM *The Guardsman*, by Ferenc Molnar. Radio adaptation by
Arthur Miller, from the translation by Grace I. Colbron and
Hans Bartsch

Franz and Marie are celebrated stars of the Vienna stage. They have been married just long enough for Franz to start wondering whether Marie really loves him. He arranges to go out of town on an engagement, but returns secretly and disguises himself as a Russian Guardsman who has sent Marie some roses. Now he calls on Marie to put her to the test.

GUARDSMAN: I am Prince Wassily Samsonov. I kiss your hand.

MARIE: Charmed. Won't you sit down?

GUARDSMAN: I must beg a thousand pardons for seeking your personal acquaintance in this awkward fashion.

MARIE: Not at all. I wrote you I wanted to meet you. You have no need for excuses.

GUARDSMAN: I am terribly happy. I was very afraid.

MARIE: I hope you are gradually recovering. Will you have some tea?

GUARDSMAN: Merci. When I had the pleasure of coming in here you were playing Chopin, n'est-ce pas?

MARIE: Oui.

GUARDSMAN: You speak French so charmingly.

MARIE: De tout, de tout—Do you like Chopin?

GUARDSMAN: Ah, yes. He write so soft, so melancholicky. I see by the paper your distinguished husband is starring in Olmutz tomorrow.

MARIE: Yes. How many lumps?

GUARDSMAN: One.

MARIE: One.

GUARDSMAN: One. I think it is not manly to care for the sweets.

MARIE: My husband takes four lumps.

GUARDSMAN: Even without sugar the lot of the husband is sweet.

MARIE: You emphasize the word "husband" so oddly.

GUARDSMAN: I do not take husbands too seriously. Your husband is not still here, no!

MARIE: No!

GUARDSMAN: No, what I meant was—I regret that I must put in the pocket for the time being the pleasure of meeting your gifted husband. I am really a great admirer of his art.

MARIE: Oh, are you!

GUARDSMAN: (*Fervently.*) Oh yes! He impersonates with such genius, such incomparable genius the—the higher life of the soul.

MARIE: Oh, yes! Lemon?

GUARDSMAN: No lemon. But it is easier to be artist with the very charmingly beautiful woman at one's side.

MARIE: You are making love to me already.

GUARDSMAN: May I say—I am happy you have recognized it. Do you regret it?

MARIE: I cannot regret what I cannot control.

GUARDSMAN: Then I may hope for the opposite of regret.

MARIE: Perhaps!

GUARDSMAN: With one little word you have make me happy. Your ear is so beautiful. . . .

MARIE: Do you smoke? These are not very good cigarettes. My husband doesn't care for anything better.

GUARDSMAN: (*Emphatically.*) These are very good cigarettes. With one little word you have make me very happy—a lonely soldier. . . .

MARIE: Don't, don't take what I said so seriously.

GUARDSMAN: You destroy my little hope.

MARIE: I object to the word "hope."

GUARDSMAN: Please do not hurt me so. (*Passionately sad.*) Vocnoyu Taspe von. Vocnogu Bosje moy.

MARIE: I beg your pardon. Are you angry with me?

GUARDSMAN: No, no! I had better go. My feelings they may carry me too far.

MARIE: Then this is farewell.

GUARDSMAN: After what I have done, what can it be but farewell?

MARIE: No, no, no! I am going to the opera tonight. Won't you call on me in my box?

GUARDSMAN: Yes, I will take the liberty of calling.

MARIE: We can continue our conversation in the anteroom. It is a little private room right off the box.

GUARDSMAN: My sincere thanks. Especially for the anteroom.

MARIE: I object to your thanks—and the misunderstanding.

GUARDSMAN: I bleed for shame. Vocnogu Bosje moy. . . .

MARIE: Oh, no, no. . . .

GUARDSMAN: I have insult the most gentle lady. . . .

MARIE: I forgive. . . .

GUARDSMAN: (*She tries to interrupt this speech.*) It is impossible to forgive the beast I make of myself. But I do forgive you; I cannot bear to stand before you again, I . . .

MARIE: (*Simply.*) I forgive you.

GUARDSMAN: (*Beaten.*) You forgive me.

MARIE: Yes. The box is number 4 on the second tier.

MUSIC: *Music.*

CHANGES IN MICROPHONE PERSPECTIVES

See page 236

FROM *The Guardsman*, by Ferenc Molnar. Radio adaptation by Arthur Miller, from the translation by Grace I. Colbron and Hans Bartsch

Franz and Marie, celebrated Viennese stage stars, have been married just long enough for each to start doubting the other's continued affection. To test Marie's fidelity, Franz has disguised himself as a Russian Guardsman, called on Marie, and made passionate protestations of love to her. Marie easily penetrated the disguise but decided to go along with the deception. Now Franz has accused her of entertaining a gentleman, but she denies it vehemently. At this critical moment, Bernhardt, a friend, rings the bell.

MARIE: (*Shocked.*) Someone is at the door.

FRANZ: Yes.

MARIE: (*Moving off mike.*) I—I'd better do my face. I'll be in my room, if anyone wants me.

SOUND: *Door closing.*

BERNHARDT: (*Off mike, coming in.*) Franz! What are you doing here? What's the matter?

FRANZ: I'm believing that I wasn't with her last night.

BERNHARDT: You weren't with . . . ? (*Laughs.*) Perhaps you weren't! Is there anything you can't believe if it's necessary?

FRANZ: Never mind about that. I've got control of myself now. Where's that valise? Oh yes.

BERNHARDT: What in the world are you doing?

FRANZ: (*Quietly.*) Now comes the moment when her lying is not going to help her any.

BERNHARDT: (*Quietly.*) The uniform? Franz, you're not going to . . .

FRANZ: Hold that boot for me.

- MARIE: (*As though from the next room.*) Who came, Franz?
- FRANZ: Just Bernhardt! (*Sotto.*) Quick, where's the beard?
- MARIE: Why don't the two of you go to a café before we have dinner?
- FRANZ: Splendid idea! Hurry and dress, dear, you'll come along?
- MARIE: No, I'll rest here a while.
- FRANZ: Not expecting someone, are you? (*Sotto.*) Buckle my sword on, Bernhardt.
- MARIE: That's a funny question.
- FRANZ: Then why should I go out?
- MARIE: Do go out—even for half an hour. Can't you understand? After this dreadful scene, I'm a wreck. Tell Bernhardt about the fire in Olmutz. The theatre in Olmutz burned down, Bernhardt.
- BERNHARDT: You don't say.
- FRANZ: Yes, and the fireman ended up 200 miles away drinking tea in my apartment.
- MARIE: Oh stop it!
- BERNHARDT: (*Sotto.*) Button the cloak, your pants will show.
- FRANZ: Is the beard thick enough? Does it look real? It got wet in the rain last night. The curl seems to have gone out of it.
- BERNHARDT: No, it's perfect. You're as Russian as the Czar.
- FRANZ: Leave us now, Bernhardt. This scene I can't play before an audience. Come back later. Then . . . then we will all know.
- BERNHARDT: Good-bye, then. And . . . and, oh, dear.
- SOUND: *Walking away . . . door opening . . . closing.*
- MARIE: (*Still off mike.*) Franz? (*Pause.*) Franz, have you gone?
- FRANZ: Bernhardt went to get a table at the café. Come in here, sweetheart. . . for a moment, before I go.
- MARIE: (*Gaily.*) Coming, dear.

FRANZ: I can't seem to find that book I was reading . . .

SOUND: *Door opens.*

FRANZ: (*Sliding into his Russian accent.*) And I love to discuss with the great critic the literature which I am always study so hard.

SOUND: *Her footsteps coming to him and toward the mike as . . .*

FRANZ: It is perhaps a little early for me to arrive, but I could not keep away until five, Madam.

CHARACTERIZATION — FEMALE

See page 166

FROM *The Women Stayed at Home*, by Arch Oboler

In an introductory note to this play, Mr. Oboler says, "... after a while, you find yourself hating too much. The enemy has cloven feet and syphilitic breath. And then you remember the little people who, all through bloody history, have fought on the wrong side, and been told it was the right side. . . ."

This is the story of a woman who was widowed after one night of love, who retreated to her lonely cottage and kept apart from the villagers nearby. The war means little to her—for she is Widow Clark. "Sorry, Widow Clark. . . Everything's being taken care of in the proper manner." One night, desperate in her loneliness, Celia resolves to take her life. As she starts to walk out into the sea, an unconscious sailor is washed ashore. Celia now has someone to care for, but—he is the enemy. She hides him, protects him, loves him, and is loved in return. Until one morning. . . .

CELIA: I love you, Carl. (*In close.*) I love you, Carl! (*Music out. Wind sighs.*) So I said it. And his arms came close around me. . . . And there was no earth or sky or death. . . . (*"Tristan" music begins, sensuously beautiful, continuing behind. Slowly, in memory of love.*) The days after that? Days that stood still in wonder—and then in rush were gone. Warm days—lazy days—wonderful days—days when the sky reached down and lifted us to the clouds, and we . . . Oh, Carl . . . Carl . . . (*Wind sighs.*) And then a new day—a morning—sun awakened me—stretched out my hand . . . (*Off mike, sharply.*) Carl! No! Carl! Carl, where are you? (*Building.*) Carl, where

are you? (*Up, crying out—echo chamber. Music out.*) Carl! (*Down.*) Gone—gone—I cried. . . . Not very long. . . . You see, I understood. Always, in our days together, there'd been a cloud, and with each passing day that cloud would have grown larger and larger until there was no warmth of sun for us. The cloud of fear—that someone of the village would see us—see him—and seeing him—end my world for me. And he knew that. . . . And so he went away. . . . (*Music: "Tristan" behind.*) Where? I don't know. I like to think he took a boat during the night and sailed out to sea in it back to where he came from. . . . Back to *his* small village by the cliffs. . . . I like to think that. . . . I know some day the fighting will be over. It must end. He said it. . . .

CARL: (*In close, whispering.*) And so the hate is not ours—not yours—not mine. . . .

CELIA: It will end. He'll come back to me. I'll never be lonely any more. . . .

(*Musical curtain.*)

CHARACTERIZATION—FEMALE

See page 166

FROM *Sometime Every Summertime*, by Fletcher Markle

MARY: Clem wasn't really bad, even though after a few days he started to look at me more and more in that funny way he looked at me when we were first introduced. I seen other boys look at me like that, and I never liked it, but when Clem looked at me that way, it seemed all right because Clem was such a fine person. He took me everywhere on the island and at the end of a week there wasn't a place left we didn't go to. We just lay on the beach after that, and went to the hotel for lunch, and sat out on the bluffs at night after dancing. Clem told me he loved me one night and asked me if I loved him and I couldn't tell him if I did or not because I didn't know, and when I told Helen and Frannie that Clem said he loved me, they asked me how I felt and I couldn't tell them either, one way or the other. I just didn't know. Sum-

meretime fools a girl about love, you know. And besides, I even had to remember to ask Clem how he spelled his last name. W-A-L-D-R-O-N, it was.

* * * *

I stayed over at the camp an extra day—I had an extra day owing from a day I worked at Christmas—and went back to the city with Clem and his friends. It was a lovely trip, and Clem made me promise to let him take me out the next night. He had a car, but it was being fixed while he was on his holiday. He wanted to take me home in a taxi from the boat, but I didn't want him to. I didn't want him to come out before I could tell about him to Mama and Papa. I told them about him when I got home, when they asked me about the summer camp and the kind of time I had. Mama was happy but Papa was angry because he always said he had to look at a boy before I went out with him, and I was glad that I didn't say nothing—like that Clem said he loved me or that he wanted to marry me. The next night Clem come around for me about eight. I wasn't ready so he talked to Papa and George, and I don't think they got along because when we went out he acted as if he was mad about something. I had on my white suit, just cleaned, and we went dancing but Clem said it was too crowded and he was tired, so we left and went to a show. When he took me home he said something about calling me and we would go dancing or something like that where it wasn't too crowded, but I didn't hear from him again. Helen saw one of Clem's friends on the street one day and she said he told her that Clem had been transferred to some other office. I guess he was too busy when he left to call me or let me know somehow about his going away.

That was four or five years ago, but every year since when I've gone to a camp and met other boys I think of Clem. Even last year, after I was married, when Frank and me had the same cottage as Helen and Frannie and me had that summer, I thought of him. I really think of him quite

a lot—that funny way he looked at me when we were introduced. Frank never looks at me that way.

CHARACTERIZATION — MALE

See page 166

FROM *Sometime Every Summertime*, by Fletcher Markle

WALDRON: She was one of the most beautiful women I've ever known. She wasn't a woman, really—a girl, a beautiful animal, a wonderful gesture of Nature. She was Italian, Canadian-born, and we met at a summer place, a West Coast island resort I went to one year with McFedries and Hayes when I was in the Vancouver office. I only knew her a little more than two weeks, but sometime every summer since then I've thought of her. In all honesty, I don't know how I felt about her. I think, at first, I was in love with her. At one point, I even considered marrying her. Whatever it was, I wanted her, and it was like a fever. It wasn't normal, it was very foolish and untidy, and I went about it like a schoolboy. I remember overhearing McFedries and Hayes talking about it one night.

* * * *

I was too annoyed to walk in on the conversation. And I suppose I didn't particularly want them to know I'd been listening. Nobody likes that kind of thing. That was the night I asked her to marry me. She refused, of course, and was very embarrassed with my asking. I must have sounded pretty hollow, now that I think back on it. I felt something big and important inside me and I made a mistake about it. I think it was simply a case of not being aware of that nice difference between love and desire. But she knew, she knew.—Nevertheless, we had an exciting two weeks. Exciting for me, anyway. She was a thrilling kind of girl, long and—When she wasn't in her bathing suit, she wore bright blouses and slacks. She was one of the few women I've ever known who looked well in slacks. A lot of women must have hated her for her loveli-

ness. I think I hated her a little myself—she wasn't mine. (*Pause.*) When we went back to town, we took the late evening boat and the moonlight at sea helped to stretch out the last few hours of the holiday. . . . It was more than a holiday to me, of course. It was another world, and I was afraid to leave it. She wanted to go home alone, refusing to let me take her out in a taxi, so I got her address and made arrangements to call for her the following night.—It was an address in the far east side of the city, and when I drove out in my car the next night I had trouble finding it. It was a narrow two-story house between a confectionery and a metal-work shop. It was still daylight, no lights on, and if a radio hadn't been going inside you wouldn't have thought anybody lived there.

* * * *

This time she was wearing a white cotton suit that had been laundered too often and was too small for her, her hair was done up in a sort of braid wound around her head, and she wasn't the same girl at all. We went dancing and it wasn't any good—we didn't dance the same way. Then we went to a late movie, and then coffee at a drive-in, and then out to her house. None of it was the same, none of it was any good. I told her I'd phone her, and drove back to my apartment the long way.—I got word that I was to be transferred a couple of days later, and I didn't call her. I couldn't. (*Pause.*) It's very difficult for a man to get over realizing that he's a snob.

MUSIC: *Tightens, and subsides.*

WALDRON: Funny, it was so important, and yet I can't even remember her name.

MUSIC: *Lingers for a few moments, and dies away.*

CHARACTERIZATION — MALE

See page 166

FROM *The People with Light Coming Out of Them*,
by William Saroyan

YOUNG MAN: It's not easy for a painter to explain his pictures. You see, you start to paint *things*, and then after a while as you learn more and more about painting, you start to paint what's *inside* of things and always coming out—*light* comes out of most things, especially people. . . . All the people in this block of Carl Street in San Francisco are like that. . . . But this block's no different from any other block in any other town in America. People are like that all over the place, and when you've got people with light coming out of them, like it comes out of these people, then you've got light coming out of their houses and out of the streets they live on, and the towns where these streets are, and the whole land where these towns are. You hear 'em coming to life in the morning, the alarm clocks ringing, the faucets running, and everybody getting up to start another day. You know they're good people because they belong to a good nation. They're free people and glad to be alive. I've done a lot of looking around all over this country, because that's my work, and everywhere I've gone—from the biggest city to the smallest town—I've seen people with light in 'em. *Human* people. People who are young and friendly and kind—oh, I know. I've seen bad people, too—all kinds of 'em—but I looked a long time, and it's gotten so that I can see right through people who *look* as if they're bad. But they're *not* bad—they're having trouble—they're up against something—things have been going wrong—they've lost faith—they need more things than they've got—they're out fighting because they don't know what else to do about the trouble—but even these people are good people. Something's pressing against their spirits, hurting 'em. Everything isn't perfect in any block of any

town or city in this country, but in *this* country it's always *trying* to improve—it's always working at the job, the same as a painter's got to work at a picture he's painting. Look out this window down at the street. It's not a fancy street. The houses aren't much. The people in them aren't people you read about in newspapers and magazines. But down there is America. That street, and those houses, and the people living in them. There is the strength of this nation, and the hope of the world. Look at the light shining out of those humble houses. That light is the light of a free and growing people, a people without fear, a people who love instead of hate, whose casual everyday humanity is stronger than any other power in the world. This is a good block. I like it here, because the best in people from all over the world is growing here into the first real nation of the world—the American nation—the nation of *human* people—the people with light coming out of them.

CONVERSATION

See page 220

FROM *Ah, Wilderness!*, by Eugene O'Neill, adapted for radio by Arthur Arent

In 1906 the Fourth of July was an occasion for more oration than it is at present. Uncle Sid and Nat, the brother and husband of Mrs. Miller, have gone out to the picnic grounds. Mrs. Miller and Lily are awaiting their return. Dick Miller is a senior in high school, is in love, and has just been forbidden by the girl's father to see her again.

MRS. MILLER: I do hope Nat and Sid aren't going to be late for dinner. (*Sighs.*) But I suppose with that darned picnic it's more likely than not. I see you've got your new dress on, Lily.

LILY: (*Embarrassed.*) Yes, I thought—if Sid's taking me to the fireworks tonight—I ought to spruce up a little.

MRS. MILLER: Lily, why don't you change your mind and marry Sid and reform him? You love him and always have—

LILY: (*Stiffly.*) I can't love a man who drinks.
(*Then.*) Essie, it's sixteen years since I broke off our engagement.

MRS. MILLER: (*Angrily.*) Sixteen years!

LILY: But if he kept his promise and stays sober and takes me to the fireworks tonight—then—(*With agitation.*) He must! It's our last chance! I know it!

MRS. MILLER: Well, dear, I hope you're right. Good gracious, if I'm not forgetting! I've got to warn that Tommy against giving me away to Nat about the fish. He knows, because I had to send him to market for it, and—

LILY: Essie, what are you talking about?

MRS. MILLER: (*Guiltily.*) Well, you know how Nat carries on about not being able to eat bluefish.

LILY: I know. He says there's a certain oil in it that poisons him.

MRS. MILLER: (*Chuckling.*) Poisons him, nothing! He's been eating bluefish for years—only I tell him each time it's weak-fish. (*Footsteps.*) Ssssh.

DICK: (*Dejected.*) 'Lo, Ma, Aunt Lily.

MRS. MILLER: Oh, it's you, Richard. Feel any better, dear?

DICK: It doesn't matter. Nothing matters.

LILY: Dick, you really musn't let it upset you this way. Things like this come up all the time. I know.

DICK: Things like what, Aunt Lily?

LILY: You and Muriel.

DICK: Oh, her! I wasn't even thinking about her. I was thinking about life. Aunt Lily, life is a joke! And everything comes out all wrong in the end!

MRS. MILLER: Richard, I think you must be hungry.

- DICK: I'm not hungry a bit! Food! That's all you think of in this house!
- MRS. MILLER: Well, somebody's got to think of it. And that reminds me: it's time to put the—er—weakfish in. Coming, Lily?
- LILY: Yes, Essie. (*Footsteps receding . . . door slams . . . Pause.*)
- DICK: (*To himself.*) A fine thing . . . the world torn up . . . civilization in its death rattle . . . and all they think of is food.

CROWD SCENE

See page 265

FROM *The Ghost of Benjamin Sweet*, by Frederick and Pauline Gilsdorf

Benjamin Sweet, Ghost, assigned to scare the redoubtable Theobald Tubbs, sees in him a kindred spirit, and, by shooting him, makes of him a kindred spirit indeed. Far from resenting Sweet's action, Tubbs, after the initial shock, finds the life of a ghost not so bad. It being Halloween night, there are all kinds of ghostly pursuits to be engaged in—such as the party at which we now peek.

- MUSIC: Swells up for bridge and joins—
- SOUND: Party noises. Fade in Mrs. Hightreble's laughter. All "humans" on filter.
- MRS. HIGHTREBLE: (*A "dowagerish" voice; very coyly silly, much pointless giggling.*) Now, I throw the apple peel over my left shoulder . . . no, my right shoulder. There!
- THE COUNT: (*A very affected English accent.*) Oh, I say, Mrs. Hightreble. It looks like a "C."
- MRS. HIGHTREBLE: Oh, let's look. I believe it is a "C." My next husband's first initial will be "C"! Who . . . no, it isn't "C" after all.
- COUNT: I swear it isn't. It's changing. The wind must be blowing.

MRS. HIGHTREBLE: It's an "F." My next husband's first initial will be "F."

ANOTHER WOMAN: (*Nasty spinsterish voice.*) Throw another peel, Mrs. Hightreble. Better get his full name so you don't make any more mistakes.

MRS. HIGHTREBLE: (*Coolly.*) Indeed? Where did I put my paring knife? Oh, yes, thank you, Count. Now ... over my left shoulder. There!

CHORUS: "O."

MRS. HIGHTREBLE: (*Gaily.*) "F" ... "O." Another one ... there.

CHORUS

OF VOICES: Another "O."

COUNT: "F." ... "O." ... "O." Strange initials, what?

SPINSTERISH

WOMAN: You must throw one more, Mrs. Hightreble. I think it's going to be his full name.

MRS. HIGHTREBLE: Oh, no, let's not play this game any more. Won't you all have some more cider?

COUNT: Now, Mrs. Hightreble ... for me ... one more apple peeling. Here ... I've cut it for you.

MRS. HIGHTREBLE: (*Crossly.*) All right ... There.

CHORUS: "L." (*Laughter.*)

COUNT: "F ... O ... O ... L." Why ... (*The idea gets across.*) Why, it spells "fool," Mrs. Hightreble. Queer, eh, what?

MRS. HIGHTREBLE: Very stupid game. It doesn't mean anything at all, Count. Where is my cider? Somebody has been drinking it out of my glass!

COUNT: Here's your glass. I filled it up for you just a moment ago. Why, it's empty. That's extraordinary!

MRS. HIGHTREBLE: I'll have to have another one, then. Oh, thank you so much. (*Pause.*) Now, shall we tell ghost stories?

- SOUND: *Somebody runs a finger up the piano keys. Little squeaks of surprise from the women.*
- COUNT: What an unearthly noise! I say, somebody's playing tricks. There's nobody near the piano at all.
- MRS. HIGHTREBLE: Maybe it's a spook, Count. (*Laughing gaily.*) Bother! Something's happened to my glass of cider again. Did you fill it, Count?
- COUNT: (*Gallantly.*) I'll replenish it for you, Mrs. Hightreble. A pleasure.
- A MAN: Let's have a ghost story.
- MRS. HIGHTREBLE: Yes . . . and I'll tell it. I know a perfectly blood-curdling one.
- CHORUS: *Voices urging her to tell it.*
- MRS. HIGHTREBLE: Well . . . there was once a captain on a ship who murdered one of his sailors. . . .
- SWEET: (*Earnestly.*) It was the sailor who murdered the captain. Tell it right or don't tell it at all.
- MRS. HIGHTREBLE: Who was that? Now, I'll tell this story the way I know it. . . . Oh, I guess it was the sailor who murdered the captain—gracious! My cider! It's gone again.
- COUNT: Allow me, Mrs. Hightreble. (*Making a joke.*) I say, I believe you're somewhat of a cider drinker.
- MRS. HIGHTREBLE: Well, the sailor wrapped the captain up in a quilt.
- SWEET: (*Impatiently.*) In a tarpaulin, not a quilt!
- MRS. HIGHTREBLE: (*Firmly.*) In a quilt, and dropped him overboard on a dark night.
- SWEET: There was a full moon that night!
- MRS. HIGHTREBLE: Somebody's being very impolite. But I guess there was a moon that night. Well, the sailor went to his bedroom . . .
- SWEET: His bunk in the fo'castle.

- MRS. HIGHTREBLE: (*Getting rattled.*) But he couldn't sleep. He pitched and tossed.
- SWEET: (*Patiently.*) It was the boat that pitched and tossed, for there wasn't any captain to steer it.
- MRS. HIGHTREBLE: Who's interrupting me? (*Upset.*) Where's my cider?
- COUNT: I say, Mrs. Hightreble. Perhaps you've had just a drop too much.
- MRS. HIGHTREBLE: Too much? I haven't had a bit!
- COUNT: That's a strange circumstance. There isn't any cider left in the bowl at all.
- MRS. HIGHTREBLE: Let me finish my story!
- SWEET: I'll finish it. Then suddenly all the lights in the boat went out.
- SOUND: *An electric switch clicks. Screams: "Who turned out that light? Put it on!"*
- SWEET: And a wind swept across the deck.
- SOUND: *Wind. Glass breaking. Furniture upset. Confusion.*
- SWEET: And the captain and his mate sailed through the air, singing. (*He and Tubbs sing lustily but not tunefully a few bars of "Sailing, Sailing, over the Bounding Main."*)
- SOUND: *More confusion. Someone yells, "Look over there by the door. There are two of them." Door slams.*
- MUSIC: *Up for ten seconds. Fade into Sweet and Tubbs still singing their song. They have both had a considerable quantity of cider.*
- TUBBS: (*Breathing heavily.*) Say, that's more exercise than I've had in forty years.
- SWEET: How do you feel now, brother? Good?
- TUBBS: I feel marvelous. But can't we sit down somewhere and have a little rest? Where are we?

- SWEET: (*Singing a few bars.*) Good idea I had—going to that party.
- TUBBS: Say, where are we?
- SWEET: This is my favorite graveyard.
- TUBBS: Pleasant spot you pick out!
- SWEET: Come on. . . . Sit down on the fence. One of the best fences in this country!
- TUBBS: It's got spikes on it.
- SWEET: You won't notice them now. . . . Try it.
- TUBBS: (*Grunting.*) Umph. . . . Yes, quite comfortable, quite comfortable.
- SOUND: Owl hoots.
- TUBBS: What's that?
- SWEET: That's a beautiful little owl. She lives here all the year round.
- TUBBS: Say, it's been a good evening, Sweet. You sure are a grand guy. This is the life!

CROWD SCENE

See page 265

FROM *They Knew What They Wanted*, by Sidney Howard.
Radio adaptation by Kenyon Nicholson

Tony Patucci, a middle-aged winegrower, has sent the picture of Joe, his young foreman, to his prospective "mail-order" bride. Amy, the girl, agrees to marry him, thinking that he is Joe. On his way to pick her up at the station, Tony has an accident and breaks his leg. Amy is finally met by Joe, is shocked to find out about the deception, but decides to go ahead and marry Tony to escape the dreariness of her former existence as a waitress. The ceremony is set for the morrow, and in the evening the neighbors have come for the preliminary festivities.

- SOUND: Music and voices much closer, indicating setting moved outside.
- JOE: (*Topping noise.*) Attention, everybody! Quiet please!

(*Comparative quiet.*) It's late. Doc has just put Tony to sleep and wants you to go home so he can rest.

SOUND: *Cast: ad libs.*

JOE: And don't forget—you're all invited back tomorrow for the wedding! Plenty eats and vino!

SOUND: (*Cast: laughter . . . ad libs: "Si, si, Joe!" "Come sta, Antonio!" "Poveretto!" "Ha tanto sofferto!" "Buena notte!" etc. . . . Sound of movement as crowd starts to go.*)

AMY: (*Fading in.*) Wait a minute! I want to tell you all good night! I've had the very best welcome that ever was and I'm the happiest girl in the world because you've been so good to me.

SOUND: *Cast: applause.*

(*Voices: "Siamo molto contenti!" "Com' è bella!" "Com' è simpatica!" "Grazie tanto, Amy!" "Grazie a Tony!"*)

JOE: (*Laughing.*) They say thanks right back to you!
(*To crowd.*) Beat it now! Buena notte! Run along. Come back tomorrow. That's the *big* day!

MUSIC: *As they go down the hill, tenor, mandolins, concertina, and chorus strike into song. . . . gradually becomes fainter as they go.*

AMY: It's all just like in the movies, ain't it?

JOE: It's late. You'd better go in and get some sleep yourself.

D I A L E C T

See page 221

FROM *They Knew What They Wanted*, by Sidney Howard.

Radio adaptation by Kenyon Nicholson

Tony is approaching sixty; Father McKee is about the same age.

TONY: Oh, Padre—excuse! I so nervous I forget to pour you dreenk.

FATHER MCKEE: Just a drop, thank you. . . . Tony, I must tell you, as your spiritual adviser, this wedding doesn't have my approval.

SOUND: *Pouring drink.*

TONY: (*Amazed.*) You no like weddin', Padre?

FATHER MC KEE: I've got my reasons for what I say.

TONY: Aw, take a pinch-a snuff! What reason you got?

FATHER MC KEE: Why aren't you marrying a woman out of your own parish?

TONY: We not got good woman in this parish. Joe is told me 'bout evra one. Dat boy he get 'round. . . .

FATHER MC KEE: (*Drily.*) I'm afraid he does.

TONY: So den I go down all da way to Frisco for look after wife. An' I find my Amy. She is like a rose, all wilt'. You puttin' water on her an' she come out most beautiful. I'm goin' marry with my Amy, Padre, an' I don' marry with nobody else! Here, have-a more da vino. . . . No? Ees verra good.

SOUND: *Pouring . . . Tony drinks heartily.*

FATHER MC KEE: Something else, Tony, that perturbs me. . . . It's not good for an old man to be marrying a young woman.

TONY: (*Indignantly.*) You think anybody marry with old woman? Take a pinch-a snuff!

FATHER MC KEE: You old scalawag, why didn't you get married forty years ago?

TONY: I think you know why I didn't get married forty years ago. Ees because I'm smart. . . . When I'm young I got nothin'. I'm broke all da time, you remember? I got no money for havin' wife. Now, I got my fine house. I got Joe for bein' foreman. I got . . .

SOUND: *Pouring from bottle.*

TONY: . . . two men for helpin' Joe. I got one Chinaman for cook. I got one Ford car. I got all I want, evrathing, except only wife. Now I'm goin' have wife. Not for work! No! for sit an' holdin' da hands an' havin' kids. Three kids. Antonio . . . Guiseppe . . . Anna. . . . I tell you, Padre, Tony know w'at he want!

FATHER MCKEE: Aren't you pretty old to start raising children?

TONY: Eh? Tony is too old? I tell you, Tony can have kids w'en he is one hundra if he want! From da sole of his feet to da top of his hat, Tony is big, strong man!

ESTABLISHING PLACE OF SCENE

See page 243

FROM *Grandpa and the Statue*, by Arthur Miller

Grandpa Monaghan has stoutly resisted taking his grandson to the Statue of Liberty because he is convinced that it is bound to fall down when a high wind comes up. But he has succumbed to his grandson's pleadings.

CHILD MONAGHAN: Ssssseuuuuuuww! Look how far you can see! Look at that ship way out in the ocean!

MONAGHAN: It is; it's quite a view. Don't let go of me hand now.

CHILD MONAGHAN: I betcha we could almost see California.

MONAGHAN: It's probably that grove of trees way out over there. They do say it's beyond Jersey.

CHILD MONAGHAN: Feel's funny. We're standing right inside her head. Is that what you meant... July IV, MCD...?

MONAGHAN: That's it. That tablet in her hand. Now shouldn't they have put Welcome All on it instead of that foreign language? Say! Do you feel her rockin'?

CHILD MONAGHAN: Yeah, she's moving a little bit. Listen, the wind!

SOUND: *Whistling of wind.*

MONAGHAN: We better get down; come on! This way!

CHILD MONAGHAN: No, the stairs are this way! Come on!

EXPRESSING EMOTION

See page 260

FROM *Hate*, by Arch Oboler

When the enemy occupied the little town, the Pastor was sure that their soldiers would respond like human beings. Against their better judgment, the people of the town cooperated, until one night—

NEIGHBOR: (*Quietly but intensely—very upset—as he bangs on door.*)
Open up! Wake up, you old fool! Open up! Open this door!

PASTOR: (*Back slightly—very sleepy.*) Yes? Who—what—

NEIGHBOR: (*Stands there, breathing heavily.*) You—you fixed everything, didn't you?

PASTOR: What? What is it!

NEIGHBOR: You old liar! (*Almost shouts the word.*) Liar!

PASTOR: (*Quietly.*) Krogstad!

NEIGHBOR: (*Begins to weep heavily.*)

PASTOR: (*Confused.*) My friend—what—

NEIGHBOR: (*Still crying.*) You said they would not harm her! You said it!

PASTOR: (*In growing horror.*) Oh, no! He promised!

NEIGHBOR: Promised! You and your (*spits the word*) friend! (*Weeps.*) Oh, my Anna! Anna!

PASTOR: Krogstad! They were not *shot*!

NEIGHBOR: No! No!

PASTOR: (*Breathes.*) Thank God!

NEIGHBOR: He hanged them. *Hanged* my Anna! (*Weeps in semi-hysteria.*)

THE GIVE AND TAKE OF DIALOGUE

See page 238

FROM *Grandpa and the Statue*, by Arthur Miller

Mr. Monaghan was the stingiest man in Brooklyn. One afternoon back in 1887 while he was reading a paper (borrowed from the neighbors), his friend Sheean approached him for a contribution for building a pedestal for the Statue of Liberty. The contribution is only a dime, but Monaghan is not for throwing good money away on something he is not sure exists. Sheean offers to take him down to the warehouse and show him the statue. Monaghan is not one to allow his convictions to stand in the way of a free trolley ride. Now Sheean has Monaghan where he wants him—or so he thinks.

SHEEAN: Now then. Do you see the Statue of Liberty or don't you see it?

MONAGHAN: I see it all right, but it's all broke!

SHEEAN: *Broke!* They brought it from France on a boat. They had to take it apart, didn't they?

MONAGHAN: You got a secondhand statue, that's what you got, and I'm not payin' for new when they've shipped us something that's all smashed to pieces.

SHEEAN: Now just a minute, just a minute. Visualize what I'm about to tell you, Monaghan; get the picture of it. When this statue is put together it's going to stand ten stories high. Could they get a thing ten stories high into a four-story building such as this is? Use your good sense, now, Monaghan.

MONAGHAN: What's that over there?

SHEEAN: Where?

MONAGHAN: That tablet there in her hand. What's it say? July Eye Vee (IV) MDCCLXXVI . . . what . . . what's all that?

SHEEAN: That means July 4, 1776. It's in Roman numbers. Very high class.

MONAGHAN: What's the good of it? If they're going to put a sign on her they ought to put it: Welcome All. That's it. Welcome All.

SHEEAN: They decided July 4, 1776, and July 4, 1776, it's going to be!

MONAGHAN: All right, then let them get their dime from somebody else!

* * * *

SHEEAN: All right, then, Monaghan. But all I can say is, you've laid a disgrace on the name of Butler Street. I'll put the dime in for ya.

MONAGHAN: Don't connect me with it! It's a swindle, is all it is. In the first place, it's broke; in the second place, if they do put it up it'll come down with the first high wind that strikes it.

SHEEAN: The engineers say it'll last forever!

MONAGHAN: And I say it'll topple into the river in a high wind! Look at the inside of her. She's all hollow!

SHEEAN: I've heard everything now, Monaghan. Just about everything. Good-bye.

MONAGHAN: What do you mean, good-bye? How am I to get back to Butler Street from here?

SHEEAN: You've got legs to walk.

MONAGHAN: I'll remind you that I come on the trolley.

SHEEAN: And I'll remind you that I paid your fare and I'm not repeating the kindness.

MONAGHAN: Sheean? You've stranded me!

L A U G H I N G

See page 260

FROM *The Show Off*, by George Kelly. Radio adaptation
by Arthur Arent

To say that Mr. and Mrs. Fisher are unhappy about their daughter's choice for a beau would still be euphemistic. Aubrey is about as brash as can be imagined, but Amy is quite infatuated with him.

AUBREY: (Off.) Well, well! Here he is, Amy. The Kid himself! Right on the dot! . . . Grab the sombrero, Chiquita.

Just hang it on the rail of the ole corral! (*Laughs boisterously.*)

MRS. FISHER: I know that laugh, too!

MR. FISHER: (*Unhappily.*) Do you suppose she'll bring him in here?

AUBREY: (*Off.*) And how is Pop tonight? And Mom? And brother, Joseph, the young Edison? (*Laughs.*)

MRS. FISHER: (*Sotto voce.*) If Joe ever heard that idiot call him "young Edison," he'd commit a hammer murder, that's what he'd do.

SOUND: *Door opens.*

AUBREY: (*On mike.*) Well, well! Good evening, one and all!

MRS. FISHER: (*Unenthused.*) Good evenin'.

AUBREY: Don't get up! Stay right where you are, folks, right where you are. Just a little social amenity—going right out on the next train. Amy, ole girl, would you mind? A glass of water—the ole aqua pura—for the Kid from West Philly. The ole tonsils are somewhat in need of lubrication. (*Laughs.*)

AMY: (*Happily.*) Certainly, Aubrey. I'll bring it right in.

AUBREY: Thank you, O', Beauteous One! (*Footsteps recede.*) Interesting mirror you have here, Mother Fisher. Looks kind of antique, too—the genuine Grand Rapids!

MRS. FISHER: You're goin' to crack it one of these days lookin' at yourself.

AUBREY: The little ole mother is a great kiddier, all right, all right. . . . (*Laughs.*) Hmmm. Little twist to the ole fore-in-hand. . . . little pat to the ole carnation. . . . There you are, Mother Fisher—the Kid from West Philly's all set for a big evening!

MENTAL ACTION AND REACTION

See page 196

FROM *The Word*, by Arch Oboler

While in the observation booth of the Empire State Building, Eve and Michael have become frightened at the curious clouds which have billowed in and seemingly covered the whole city. When they were ready to leave, they found no elevators in service, and finally had to walk down. After an interminable trek, they have now stepped out into the street.

EVE: *(In great surprise.)* Michael!

MICHAEL: Gosh!

EVE: *(Tears in voice.)* Oh, Michael!

MICHAEL: *(His voice belies his words.)* It's all right, dear. It's all right.

EVE: Michael, what's happened?

SOUND: *Wind sighs.*

MICHAEL: *(Dazedly.)* Not a person on the streets. . . .

EVE: There were so many!

MICHAEL: Yeah!

EVE: Michael! Michael! Listen!

MICHAEL: *(After a pause.)* I don't hear anything!

SOUND: *Wind sighs softly.*

EVE: Listen!

MICHAEL: Wind!

EVE: That's it! That's it! Only the wind! Michael, don't you remember? Ever since we got to New York—all day yesterday—all night—morning—the noise, Michael. . . . Don't you remember the noise?

MICHAEL: *(Breathes the word.)* Yes, I . . .

EVE: And now nothing but the wind! *(Building.)* What's happened? Why is it so quiet now? Where are the people? *(Up, almost hysterically.)* Michael, tell me!

MONTAGE

See page 219

FROM *The Clinic*, by Ted Key *

John Libbey, finding that he has to have an operation which will probably be fatal, absconds with two thousand dollars from the office where he works. His idea is to take his wife and go to the places and do the things they have always wanted to do, but never could afford. Stella demurs, but John convinces her that this is his dying wish. This, then, is the way they get rid of the two grand. This is a combination montage which, by means of progressive vignettes, advances plot, action, and time.

MUSIC: *Descriptive music. Hold . . . then fade into background for this sequence.*

BARBER: Anything else besides the haircut?

LIBBEY: A shampoo and a scalp massage and tell the boy I want a shine. And put some of that smelly stuff on my hair and whatever else you can think of. Give me whatever you can think of.

MUSIC: *Same thread of music swells up . . . then fades behind.*

BEAUTY PARLOR

OPERATOR: The manicurist will be with you in a jiffy.

STELLA: (*Listlessly.*) How long does this take? I'd like my hair washed and after the facial maybe a marcel.

MUSIC: *Swells up . . . then drops behind.*

LIBBEY: Look all right, Stella?

STELLA: It fits all right.

LIBBEY: How is it in the back? Is it all right there?

STELLA: How's it supposed to be? You never bought a suit with tails before. They just hang. They hang all right.

MUSIC: *Swells up . . . then drops under.*

STELLA: Well, John?

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- LIBBEY: I like it.
- STELLA: Yes, but should I take it?
- LIBBEY: I'd take it. It's the prettiest dress I ever seen on you, Stella.
- MUSIC: *Swells up into operatic aria, sung by soprano voice . . . hold . . . then fade down and into the roar of a fight crowd . . . hold . . . then fade down under.*
- VOICE: (*Far off-mike.*) The winner and still heavyweight champion of the world, *Joe Louis!*
- SOUND: *Cheers sweep in . . . hold then fade down into the hum of voices in the background.*
- CROUPIER: Eighteen on the red.
- SOUND: *Chips . . . the whirl of the roulette wheel.*
- CROUPIER: Bets, please.
- SOUND: *The ball coming to a stop.*
- CROUPIER: Twenty-two on the black.
- MUSIC: *Fade in descriptive music; then fade into typical melody played by hand organ . . . hold . . . then keep in background.*
- LIBBEY: An organ-grinder, Stella.
- STELLA: John, let him have something. Have you something?
- ORGAN-GRINDER: (*After silence, far off-mike.*) *Grazias, grazias, signor, grazias!*
- STELLA: How much did you give him, John?
- LIBBEY: Five dollars.
- MUSIC: *Swells in . . . hold . . . then fade behind.*
- STELLA: John, you see it? Look 'way down there, see?
- LIBBEY: A boat. It's about the size of . . . we must be going ten times as fast. Twenty times.
- STELLA: How long will we stay in Florida? Long, John?
- LIBBEY: As long as we feel like. Let's see what it's all about first. We'll stay as long as we feel like.

- MUSIC: *Swells up . . . hold . . . fades as sound of ocean waves sweeping on beach comes up strong . . . hold . . . fade music behind sound of waves.*
- STELLA: I could just lay here and lay here, the sand's so warm.
- LIBBEY: We'll take one more swim tomorrow before we go. Listen to the ocean. You like the sound of the ocean?
- STELLA: The sun's good for you, John. You've got a tan.
- LIBBEY: Have I? So have you. Your face and your shoulders.
- STELLA: I don't feel like going back. I'd like to stay here, John.
- LIBBEY: Kiss me.
- SOUND: *Soft kiss.*
- STELLA: Do we have to go back, John?
- MUSIC: *Descriptive music swells up . . . hold . . . then fades out.*

NARRATION

See page 217

FROM *Little Johnny Appleseed*, by Bernard C. Schoenfeld

The story of Johnny Appleseed is a story of courage and perseverance which is still told in every schoolroom in the country. Mr. Schoenfeld has made his poetry sing of the wonders of America, and has done it so simply and effectively that it comes as an inspirational message in the highest aesthetic light. This is the concluding narration.

- MUSIC: *Appleseed theme under softly.*
- NARRATOR: From Jefferson to Van Buren is thirty-seven
 years of seeds bursting, trees growing.
 Even birds and frost,
 Even wind and insects
 Can't kill thirty-seven years of seeding,
 planting, growing.
 And the War of 1812 was over.
 And the Erie Canal was done.

And steamboats whistled on the rivers.
 And there was a man named Jackson and a
 man named Clay and a third called Daniel
 Webster,
 And in the Illinois Legislature a lanky
 lawyer called Lincoln spoke his little piece.
 But Johnny Appleseed kept planting,
 All by himself.
 And lo and behold!
(Theme finishes dramatically and sharply.)

NARRATOR: And lo and behold!

MUSIC: *Theme under fervently.*

NARRATOR: One hundred thousand square miles had borne
 fruit from his appleseeds!
 One hundred thousand square miles of America
 were pink and white from his appleseeds!
 One hundred thousand square miles is a lot of
 ground for a little man to cover.
 And that's how I know Johnny was a giant.
 For if that doesn't make a giant
 I'd like to know what does.
*(Theme out . . . a second's pause . . . then finale music
 under.)*

NARRATOR: Some people say
 One summer afternoon in 1838
 Johnny lay down and died.
 I know a giant doesn't die.
 I know that anyone who loves a seed, his country,
 and his God
 Lives on in others as a legend,
 As a dream,
 As a strength.
 So America goes on planting.
 Maybe they're not appleseeds.
 Maybe they're other kinds of seeds:
 Seeds we don't put into the earth,
 Seeds we grow by acting certain ways.

We know what a seed can do to our life
 Or to a nation's life.
 Just a seed and someone to plant it somewhere
 And see it doesn't die. . . .
(Finale builds to crescendo, then breaks off sharply.)

SOUND: *Dead air.*

NARRATOR: *(Quietly.):*
 You, out there,
 You little men like Johnny Appleseed!
 You, too, can be a giant
 If you know what seeds to plant. . . .

MUSIC: *Build to climax and out.*

NARRATION

See page 217

FROM *Listen to the People*, by Stephen Vincent Benét *

This is the opening narration of one of Mr. Benét's most famous patriotic scripts. It was broadcast over NBC Blue, July 4, 1941, in cooperation with the Council for Democracy.

NARRATOR: This is Independence Day,
 Fourth of July, the day we mean to keep,
 Whatever happens and whatever falls
 Out of a sky grown strange;
 This is firecracker day for sunburnt kids,
 The day of the parade,
 Slambanging down the street.
 Listen to the parade!
 There's J. K. Burney's float,
 Red-white-and-blue crepe-paper on the wheels,
 The Fire Department and the local Grange,
 There are the pretty girls with their hair curled
 Who represent the Thirteen Colonies,
 The Spirit of East Greenwich, Betsy Ross,
 Democracy, or just some pretty girls.
 There are the veterans and the Legion Post
 (Their feet are going to hurt when they get home),

* From "Listen to the People," in *Selected Works of Stephen Vincent Benét*, published by Rinehart & Company, Inc. Copyright, 1941, by Stephen Vincent Benét.

The band, the flag, the band, the usual crowd,
 Good-humored, watching, hot,
 Silent a second as the flag goes by,
 Kidding the local cop and eating popsicles,
 Jack Brown and Rosie Shapiro and Dan Shay,
 Paul Bunchick and the Greek who runs the Greek's,
 The black-eyed children out of Sicily,
 The girls who giggle and the boys who push,
 All of them there and all of them a nation.
 And, afterwards,
 There'll be ice cream and fireworks and a speech
 By Somebody the Honorable Who,
 The lovers will pair off in the kind dark
 And Tessie Jones, our honor graduate,
 Will read the declaration.
 That's how it is. It's always been that way.
 That's our Fourth of July, through war and peace,
 That's our Fourth of July.

And a lean farmer on a stony farm
 Came home from mowing, buttoned up his shirt
 And walked ten miles to town,
 Musket in hand.

He didn't know the sky was falling down
 And, it may be, he didn't know so much.
 But people oughtn't to be pushed around
 By kings or any such.

A workman in the city dropped his tools.
 An ordinary, small-town kind of man
 Found himself standing in the April sun,
 One of a ragged line
 Against the skilled professionals of war,
 The matchless infantry who could not fail,
 Not for the profit, not to conquer worlds,
 Not for the pomp or the heroic tale
 But first, and principally, since he was sore.
 They could do things in quite a lot of places,
 They shouldn't do them here, in Lexington.

He looked around and saw his neighbors' faces . . .

AN ANGRY

VOICE: *Disperse, ye villains! Why don't you disperse?*

A CALM

VOICE: *Stand your ground, men. Don't fire unless fired upon. But if they mean to have a war, let it begin here!*

NARRATOR: (*Resuming.*) Well, that was that. And later, when he died
 Of fever or a bullet in the guts,
 Bad generalship, starvation, dirty wounds
 Or any one of all the thousand things
 That kill a man in wars,
 He didn't die handsome but he did die free
 And maybe that meant something. It could be.
 Oh, it's not pretty! Say it all you like!
 It isn't a bit pretty. Not one bit.
 But that is how the liberty was won.
 That paid for the firecrackers and the band.

PLAYING THE MIKE

See page 256

FROM *Strange Interlude*, by Eugene O'Neill. Radio
 adaptation by Arthur Arent

In the stage version of the play, the actors make known their inner thoughts as asides to the audience. This presented a difficulty for air. The filter was tried, but did not seem real enough. A sotto voice was used by each actor on the air, to give the impression of a person speaking to himself. The direction "filter" was left in the script as a guide to the actors, but no filter was used. This is a most unusual example of playing the mike. Usually the movement is much less noticeable.

Nina, grieving for her fiancé who was shot down in the first World War, is urged by her friend, Charles Marsden, and by her doctor, Ned Darrell, to marry Sam Evans. Sam is a bluff, hearty person whom they thought would be good for Nina. Nina marries him, but, finding out that there is hereditary insanity in Sam's family, does not have any children by him, though she longs for them desperately. She turns to Dr. Darrell, and falls in love with him. Just as she is going to tell Sam of her love for Darrell, there is a new complication—resulting in Darrell's taking a long trip.

MARSDEN: And that was that . . . the great revelation was postponed—for the time being. . . . One Sunday afternoon about a year later, we were in the library of Nina's house in a New York suburb. Nina sat beside the open fire. She was sewing on something for the baby—Gordon, she called him, after the other Gordon who was killed. I glanced at her over the top of my newspaper, wondering what she was thinking. . . . (*Fades.*)

NINA: (*Filter.*) I wonder if there's a draught in the baby's room . . . maybe I'd better close the window . . . little Gordon . . . why hasn't Ned written? . . . it's better he hasn't . . . but I forgive him . . . I have my baby.

EVANS: (*Calling, off.*) Nina! You downstairs?

NINA: (*Calling.*) Yes, Sam! Here I am, dear! With Charlie! (*Filter.*) Sam is a wonderful father . . . he's become a new man in the past year . . . I have a genuine respect for him now . . . and I am making him happy! How queerly things worked out! . . . And I don't feel wicked . . . I feel good!

SOUND: *Footsteps approach during the above.*

EVANS: (*On mike.*) Hello, dear, how do you feel? . . . Hi, Charlie. How's the boy?

MARSDEN: Hello, Sam. I am as always. Good old Charlie! By the way, Nina, did I tell you I ran into Dr. Darrell in Munich?

NINA: (*Stammering.*) You saw—Ned? (*Filter.*) Ned! . . . he saw Ned! . . . why hasn't he told me before? . . . why did he look at me like that? . . . does he suspect?

MARSDEN: (*Casually.*) Yes, I happened to run into him. (*Filter. With savage satisfaction.*) That struck home! Look at her! . . . guilty! Nina and Darrell! . . . then I was right when I thought . . . (*To Nina.*) When I saw him he was with a rather startling looking blonde—quite beautiful, if you like the type. I gathered they were very good friends.

NINA: (*Airily.*) Why tell me, Charlie? It's nothing to me if has fifty blondes—(*Filter.*) (*Distractedly.*) Nothing to me?

Oh, Ned, why haven't you written? . . . stop it! . . . what a fool I am! . . . Ned's dead for me! . . . Oh, I hate Charlie! . . . why did he have to tell me?

EVANS: Did Ned say anything about coming back?

MARSDEN: No, but he did ask about you, Nina. Wanted to know about your baby.

EVANS: (*Proudly.*) Too bad he couldn't see what a world-beater we've got! Eh, Nina?

NINA: (*Mechanically.*) Yes, dear. (*Filter . . . joyfully.*) Ned asked about my baby! . . . Then he hasn't forgotten! . . . if he came back, he'd come to see his baby! . . .

EVANS: Hadn't you better go up and have a look at young Gordon?

NINA: Yes, dear, I'm going now . . . See you later, Charlie.

EVANS: Wait, Nina. I'll come with you. I want to say good-night to my son . . . Be right down, Charlie.

SOUND: *Footsteps recede.*

MARSDEN: All right.

SOUND: *Door closes.*

MARSDEN: (*Filter . . . excited.*) What happened then? . . . That look in her eyes . . . when I mentioned Darrell . . . does she still . . . (*Miserably.*) What am I hoping for? What do I want? If Nina were free . . . what could I offer her? Myself? What a prize! (*Bitterly.*)

QUICK CHARACTER CHANGE

See page 216

FROM *Payment Deferred*, by Jeffrey Dell. Based on the novel by C. S. Forester. Radio adaptation by Gerald Holland

The radio actor must often change his character very quickly. He may have to change in age, disposition, emotional state. The change may occur in contiguous scenes, or within the same scene. The following is an example of the latter.

William Marble, a lowly bank clerk, has, unbeknownst to anyone, killed his nephew, and invested wisely the money from the

dead man's wallet. Making a killing in the stock market, he comes home and tells his wife the good news. But there is a troubled look on his wife's face.

ANNIE: Will.

WILL: Yes.

ANNIE: (*Making the plunge.*) Will, couldn't you tell me?

WILL: Tell you?

ANNIE: All about it, I mean.

WILL: (*Slightly uneasy.*) About what? I don't know what you're talking about, Annie.

ANNIE: My dear, I'd never blame you... whatever you've done—really I wouldn't.

WILL: How do you mean... whatever I'd done—?

ANNIE: Will, can't you trust me? It frightens me not knowing... I'd rather you told me... everything.

WILL: (*Getting really alarmed.*) I... I don't know what you're driving at.

ANNIE: (*Feeling that he does.*) I couldn't help guessing, dear. You've looked so worried and that jumping so when anyone knocked... Oh, don't you see?

WILL: (*Trembling.*) What have you guessed?

ANNIE: Dear... I tried to think that it wasn't that...

WILL: (*Whispering.*) What?

ANNIE: I tried to pretend to myself that it was all my imagination, but all the time I... I knew... I just thought if you *could* talk to me about it... it might... help. There's one thing, Will... Does anyone suspect?

WILL: Annie... Annie...

ANNIE: All right, dear, we won't talk about it... I only felt that if the Bank sent anyone here when you weren't in, I shouldn't know what to...

WILL: (*Incredulously.*) The Bank? The Bank, did you say?

ANNIE: When they find the money's gone, I mean. Yes, dear, I

guessed. I mean, a man in your position . . . thousands of pounds like that, but I understand, Will. The temptation . . .
(Marble is now half laughing, half sobbing.)

ANNIE: Dear, why do you look like that? I was bound to know sooner or later, wasn't I? . . . I . . . Will! Don't, dear! Don't! What is it? What have I . . . What have I said?

WILL: You'll . . . be . . . the . . . death of me . . . Annie!

ANNIE: What do you mean, Will?

WILL: *(Laughing hysterically.)* You really don't think I'm a thief, do you! It's so funny.

MUSIC: *Up and out of his hysterical laughter.*

MUSIC: *Up to finish.*

READING

See page 263

FROM *Grandpa and the Statue*, by Arthur Miller

Gramps Monaghan was the tightest tightwad in Brooklyn. When everyone was contributing a dime to build the base for the Statue of Liberty, he demurred for one reason or another, his final point being that the writing on the inscription was July IV MDCCLXXVI, undoubtedly a foreign language. Why not just put "Welcome All" on it in English? The statue was raised without Monaghan's dime, and now, despite his antipathy toward the project, we find that Monaghan has allowed his grandson to persuade him to visit it.

CHILD MONAGHAN: What does this say?

SOUND: *Footsteps halt.*

MONAGHAN: Why, it's just a tablet, I suppose. I'll try it with me spectacles, just a minute. Why, it's a poem, I believe . . . "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift . . . my lamp beside . . . the golden door!" Oh, dear. *(Ready to weep.)* It had Welcome All on it all the time. Why didn't Sheean tell me? I'd a given

him a quarter! Boy . . . go over there and here's a nickel and buy yourself a bag of them peanuts.

CHILD MONAGHAN: (*Astonished.*) Gramp!

MONAGHAN: Go on now, I want to study this a minute. And be sure the man gives you full count.

CHILD MONAGHAN: I'll be right back.

SOUND: *Footsteps running away.*

MONAGHAN: (*To himself.*) "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses . . ."

MUSIC: *Swells from a sneak to full, then under to background.*

SCREAMING AND WHISPERING

See page 259

FROM *Sorry, Wrong Number*, by Lucille Fletcher

Through some freak of chance, Mrs. Stevenson, a nervous, neurotic woman, hears a conversation on the telephone which leads her to believe that a murder is going to be committed. She is unable to convince the authorities, but in telling them what she heard, she realizes that the description of the victim-to-be fits her. She is terrified at the idea, and tries to get the police again on the telephone, but by this time she knows someone has entered her house.

MRS. STEVENSON: (*In a suffocated voice.*) I won't pick it up. I won't let them hear me. I'll be quiet—and they'll think . . . (*With growing terror.*) But if I don't call someone now—while they're still down there—there'll be no time. . . .

SOUND: *She picks up the receiver and dials Operator. Ring three times.*

OPERATOR: (*Filter.*) Your call, please?

MRS. STEVENSON: (*In a desperate whisper.*) Operator. I—I'm in desperate trouble. I—

OPERATOR: (*Filter.*) I cannot hear you, madam. Please speak louder.

MRS. STEVENSON: (*Still whispering.*) I don't dare. I—there's someone listening. Can you hear me now?

OPERATOR: (*Filter.*) No, madam.

MRS. STEVENSON: (*Desperately.*) But you've got to hear me. Oh—please. You've got to help me. There's someone in this house. Someone who's going to murder me. And you've got to get in touch with the...

SOUND: *Click of receiver being put down in Mrs. Stevenson's line.*

MRS. STEVENSON: (*Bursting out wildly.*) Oh—there it is. He's put it down—he's put down the extension phone. He's coming up... (*Her voice is hoarse with fear.*) He's coming up the stairs. Give me the Police Department... the police...

OPERATOR: (*Filter.*) One moment, please—

SOUND: *Call is put through. Phone rings at other end. On second ring, Mrs. Stevenson starts to scream. She screams twice as the phone continues to ring. On the fourth scream, we hear the sound of a subway train as it roars over a nearby bridge. It drowns out all sound for a second. Then it passes and we hear the phone still ringing at the other end. The telephone is picked up.*

SERGEANT DUFFY: (*Filter.*) Police station, Precinct 43. Duffy speaking. (*A pause.*)

SERGEANT DUFFY: (*Filter. Louder.*) Police Department. Sergeant Duffy speaking.

GEORGE: (*Same distinctive voice as in beginning of play.*) Sorry. Wrong number.

SOUND: *Hangs up.*

SPEAKING BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

See page 263

FROM *The Ghost of Benjamin Sweet*, by Frederick and
Pauline Gilsdorf

The Powers-That-Be have ordered gentleman-ghost Benjamin Sweet to scare Theobald Tubbs. Sweet joins Tubbs in his study just as Mrs. Tubbs finishes giving Theobald a verbal tongue lashing. Obviously, Theobald is in no mood for parlor tricks. He commands Sweet to get out or he will shoot him.

- TUBBS: I'll give you till I count five. . . . One, two . . .
- SWEET: (*Delighted.*) Say, this is something out of the ordinary.
- TUBBS: Three, four . . . (*Pause.*)
- SWEET: Well? Five?
- TUBBS: Did you hear me?
- SWEET: (*Chuckling.*) Haven't heard you say "five" yet.
- TUBBS: A man has the legal right to shoot anybody who forces entry into his house.
- SWEET: Yes, indeed. You're perfectly right. You can't be too careful these days.
- TUBBS: Five!
- SWEET: Well?
- SOUND: *Revolver shot. Glass breaks as if shattered by the bullet.*
- SWEET: Now, that's a shame. Right into that mirror.
- TUBBS: (*Awed.*) It didn't hurt you?
- SWEET: No. I think it went through my head . . . or maybe it was my shoulder. No, it was my head, all right. But you certainly ruined that mirror.
- MRS. TUBBS: (*Screaming, off mike, behind a door.*) Theobald! Theobald?
- SWEET: I think I'll just lock that door. I don't like your wife, Mr. Tubbs.
- SOUND: *A key clicks in a lock. Rattling doorknob and pounding on door.*

MRS. TUBBS: Theobald! Let me in!

TUBBS: (*Calling with effort.*) There's nothing wrong, Matilda. My . . . gun . . . just went off.

MRS. TUBBS: I heard glass. What broke? (*Pause.*) Was that (*Ominously.*) my good mirror? (*Pause.*)

MRS. TUBBS: (*Loudly, still off mike.*) Theobald! . . . Was that my good mirror?

TUBBS: (*Whispering angrily.*) There'll be the deuce to pay when she finds out.

SWEET: I'll fix her up for a while. (*In his most spectral tones.*) Matilda Tubbs! Matilda Tubbs! Do you hear me?

MRS. TUBBS: (*Scared.*) What is that?

SWEET: (*Still in a chilling voice.*) Your time is coming, Matilda Tubbs! (*Laughs.*)

MRS. TUBBS: (*Retreats, screaming.*)

SWEET: There! She's gone.

TUBBS: (*Admiringly.*) Say, you aren't a bad sort, there . . . er—Mr. . . . er . . .

SWEET: Sweet is the name. Benjamin C. Sweet.

TUBBS: I think I was . . . maybe a little hasty, Mr. Sweet.

SWEET: Oh, don't mention it. A natural mistake, Mr. Tubbs.

SPECIFIC PHYSICAL ACTIONS — WALKING

See page 258

FROM *One Special for Doc*, by Milton Geiger

Old Doc Harshaw is just preparing to close his drug store when a young man comes in to buy some poison tablets. The young man, Allen, says he wants to use them to disinfect a cut on his hand. But Doc suspects that Allen wants to commit suicide, and by a ruse, dissuades him from buying the tablets just then. To let Allen talk out his troubles, Doc suggests some food. He locks up the store, and they start down to Hank's Diner.

SOUND: *Fade-in footsteps of Harshaw and Allen walking on wet gravel. Rain and remote thunder.*

HARSHAW: Minute you came in I knew something was wrong. It's bad stuff lettin' yourself go that way. You have a lot to live for.

ALLEN: I must have been crazy, Doc.

HARSHAW: You looked fairly prosperous for a youngster. And you looked healthy. So I figured it couldn't be that. That leaves one other thing—especially when the principal . . . or principals . . . are young and foolish. (*Pause.*) Is she pretty?

ALLEN: (*Choking up.*) She's . . . beautiful!

HARSHAW: Well . . . if you'd like to talk . . . go ahead. Maybe you'll feel better about it all.

ALLEN: I *want* to talk. And I'm glad it's you I have to talk to. (*Pause.*) It seems so . . . so trivial, now. But I can't go back to her! I can't!

HARSHAW: It's not that bad.

ALLEN: I don't know. Julie and I have been sweethearts ever since we were kids in school. In high school we were inseparable. We always said we . . . we'd get married. We meant everything to each other. It's been a long time, Doc . . . waiting. But I couldn't ever seem to make enough money at any of my jobs. . . .

HARSHAW: You're young.

ALLEN: Tonight . . . tonight I came down to see her. I . . . I never saw her looking so lovely. Something in silver and black that made her look whiter and more beautiful than I'd ever seen her. She was waiting for someone . . . and I knew she wasn't expecting me . . . (*His voice fades out.*)

SPECIFIC STAGE BUSINESS

See page 200

FROM *The Show Off*, by George Kelly. Adapted for radio by Arthur Arent

NARRATOR: Amy kept company with Aubrey Piper for a couple of months. He regularly sent her orchids from the best

florist in town—and then went around telling everybody how much they cost. On their honeymoon they couldn't afford Niagara Falls, so they went to Atlantic City—on money Aubrey borrowed from Pa Fisher. . . . It was about six months after they were married that Aubrey dropped in at the house one day . . . (*Fades.*)

AUBREY: Good afternoon to you, Mother Fisher. Amy here?

MRS. FISHER: Why, no, Aubrey. Isn't she home?

AUBREY: Guess she's still out looking for a house. I just stopped in on my way to the Automobile Show. Thought she might be here.

SOUND: *Cane taps.*

MRS. FISHER: Well, she isn't. And for goodness sake, if you must walk around with a cane like a dude, stop playin' with it when you're talkin' to me!—Didn't I see you drive up in a auto just now?

AUBREY: Uh-huh. I got the loan of Harry Albright's Pierce Arrow.

MRS. FISHER: Couldn't you find somebody who had a Ford?

AUBREY: Nothing's too good for the Kid from Philly, Mother o' Mine.

SOUND: *Four notes struck on cut-glass bowl.*

MRS. FISHER: Get away from that cut glass—and what's this about lookin' for a house? What's the matter with the flat you're in?

AUBREY: We've got to get out. They're tearing the building down.

MRS. FISHER: You won't find it so easy to get a place as reasonable as that again in a hurry.

AUBREY: I don't *want* a place as reasonable as that if I can get something that looks better! I want a home—something with a bit of ground around it—where I can do a bit of tennis in the evening.

MRS. FISHER: Stop swinging that cane like as if it was a tennis racket!

You'll bust the chandelier! You'll pay plenty for a place like that.

AUBREY: (*Tapping cane for emphasis.*) That is exactly what I expect to do, Mother Fisher, exactly what I expect to do!

MRS. FISHER: And stop tapping with it! My goodness!

STYLIZED DIALOGUE

See page 77

FROM *Fever in the Night*, by Harry Kleiner

This is an impressionistic, stylized description of the dream which comes during Everyman's troubled sleep. Everyman is a victim of nearly everyone—a nagging wife, a driving foreman, an insistent conveyor machine. In his dream, he has just entered the factory and started on his daily routine.

SOUND: *Fade in factory noises: machines crashing, whistles blowing, great general din. On-mike spaced clicking. Clicking punctuates lines.*

EVERYMAN: (*Dully.*)
Tighten.
Tighten.
Nut 44.
On an endless belt
A Nut 44. (!)
Mary needs an overcoat,
Junior needs a pair of shoes,
Come on tighten,
Tighten,
Nut 44
For the Bill Collector
And four more:
Gas and coal and electric rent
Bills and bills on an endless belt.

SOUND: *Machinery noises slightly up.*
What's it get you?
What's it for? (!)

Eight to six five days a week,
 And at the end you get plowed under.
 Six feet under and you're through,
 Through and under with all you've felt,
 Six feet under you get plowed under
 With a Nut 44 on an endless belt.

FOREMAN: (*Shouting angrily.*)
 Hey there Everyman!
 What the hell's the idea—
 What are you holding the line up for?

SOUND: *Background up stronger.*

EVERYMAN: Got to fasten the Nut faster! (!)
 Got to go faster! (!)
 Faster! (!)

SOUND: *Machinery up.*

FOREMAN: (*More insistent.*)
 Speed it up!
 Speed it up!
 Faster faster
 Work work
 Faster faster!

SOUND: *Machinery building.*

EVERYMAN: (*Rapidly.*)
 Nut 44 on an endless belt—

FOREMAN: (*As though he were making a speech.*)
 Time is money,
 Time is dough.
 Hurry hurry
 Faster faster!
 Speed it up!
 Speed it up!
 Get your fingers
 Faster flying
 Flying faster!

SOUND: *Continues clicking in background over machinery: Build.
 Not so slow!*

Time is money
Time is dough!

SOUND: *Machinery roars out. Then down slightly to build to crescendo over:*

EVERYMAN: *(Starts low, dull; near the last three lines he accelerates, until he is almost screaming the words.)*

Nut 44 on an endless belt
On an endless belt a Nut 44:
Fasten the bolt onto Nut 44—
Creation bolted!
I am the Christ of Nut 44
Nut 44 is the Word and the Light,
Great is the Nut 44,
I am the Nut 44
God is the Nut 44
Forty-four
Nut 44
God 44!

SOUND: *Crashing crescendo of machinery up and hold.*

TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS—ONE WAY—
STRAIGHT AND COMEDY

See page 266

FROM *Morn of Plenty*, by Max Wilk

Marty Fuller, publicity chief for Finest Films, has a new star on his hands. The morning after a rave preview of Anne Fowler's first picture, Marty has orders to play Anne up—especially since her option is up this week. So Marty does the most natural thing—picks up his phone to congratulate Anne on her new status.

MARTY: Hello. Is Anne there? This is Mr. Fuller, at the studio. Is she up yet? Huh . . . ? Went out an hour ago? But it's only nine-thirty. Where'd she go . . . ? You don't know? Well, I've got to have her here . . . it's important. Have her call me immediately when she gets back, and keep closer track of her from now on . . . Oh . . . *(Sick laugh. Voice changes.)* Well, I'm sorry Mrs. Fowler, but you know how it is . . .

Now that Anne's a star, she's important to us... Yes... Good-bye (*Puts down receiver. To secretary.*) Can you imagine that? She got up early this morning and nobody knows where she went...

In a later scene, Marty begins to wish Alexander Graham Bell had never been born. In the following, phones ring on line cues, and at the end he slams down all the receivers.

MARTY: Hello? (*Changes to distress.*) Oh, yes Manuel... Tonight? Yes, now let me see... That's right, I did say the Legion Fights, didn't I... Well, now look... (*Second phone.*) Just a minute, will you, old boy? Thanks. Hello? Yes, this is Marty Fuller... Oh, it's you, dear... Yes, I remember... A lead story for your column? Did I promise you one really? Yes, well, now let me see, Louella... (*Third phone.*) Just a minute, dear, will you?... Hold on Manuel... (*He is getting more frantic.*) Hello? Hello?... Oh, R. F. Yes... change the whole campaign? But it's gone pretty far... Well, I'll try... Could you hold on just a minute, R. F.? Thanks... Now, Louella, I'll be right with you dear... Manuel, I'm sorry I kept you waiting, old boy... (*Fourth phone.*) Oh-h-h-h... Hello? What...? I don't know... no, of course not... Listen... (*Slams phones down haphazardly.*) Oh nuts! Isn't there any place in Southern California where I can be alone!!!!



A

The physical nature of sound, and the tools of the trade

IT is possible for a person to drive an automobile without knowing much more than where the steering wheel is, or to speak on the radio without knowing much more than which side of the mike to speak into. But anyone who hopes to achieve professional competency in any field should have some knowledge of the materials and tools with which he works. Like the director and actor in the theatre, to whom a knowledge of scenery, lighting, and makeup is a basic necessity, the professional radio artist should have some distinct knowledge of the nature of sound, and his primary tools, microphones. Knowledge of equipment will never make a good actor or a director out of a poor one. But such knowledge will enable a good artist to utilize his talents to much better advantage.

The following material does not pretend to completeness. An effort has been made to make it simple enough to use; inclusive enough to be of use.

SOUND

What sound is. Sound is a rhythmic disturbance of molecules. Sound waves travel through the air, through water, and through the ground and other solid masses. The ordinary person can distinguish from 15 or 16 cycles to 15 or 16 thousand cycles. There are sounds much too high for us to hear, and too low to hear, but they exist nevertheless.

How sound is made. Perhaps the most easily understood example of sound propagation is that of the harp string. When the string is plucked, it vibrates back and forth. This vibration compresses the molecules of the air when it goes forward, and creates a rarified condition of air particles when it goes backwards. We have therefore a series of compressions and rarifications going out in all directions like the ripples on a

pond. (Ripples spread in concentric circles, but sound goes in all directions and it is more correct to think of it as a series of concentric spheres, rather than concentric circles. We are using the simpler analogy merely for sake of clarity.)

The physical characteristics of sound. These "ripples" of sound consist of a peak and a depression, compressed and rarified. One complete ripple (one peak and one trough) is called a cycle, and the number of cycles in a specific time is called the frequency. Thus the string which generates 440 complete pressure waves in a second has a frequency of 440 (cycles per second).

Sound which is audible to the human ear (that segment of frequencies with which we are concerned) possesses five separate physical characteristics: pitch, volume, duration, quality, and loudness.

Pitch. The harp string mentioned above is the A above middle C. Whenever it is plucked, it vibrates 440 times each second. The frequency determines the pitch of the sound on the musical scale. No matter how easily or vigorously the string is plucked, it still vibrates 440 cycles each second and is always in the same pitch.

Volume. If we pluck the string lightly, we have little volume. If we pluck it vigorously, we have a greater volume of sound.

Duration. If we pluck the string intermittently, we get a pattern of musical notes; the same pitch and volume, but coming at intervals. This is the duration of the sound (and silence). These three things: pitch, volume, and duration may be precisely measured.

Quality. Quality is the fourth physical characteristic of sound. It is the combination of several factors. The string which we plucked has an overall vibration of 440 times each second. But as the string vibrates, the middle segment of the string starts an independent vibration of its own, and each segment on the top and bottom start vibrations which are further broken down. Each of these secondary vibrations is called an overtone. The end of the string is bridged to a sounding board or resonator which amplifies the vibrations of the string in a certain manner.

The particular pattern of overtones plus the vibrations of the resonator gives a certain quality. A violinist playing the A440 (A above middle C) may be joined by a clarinetist playing the same note. The pitch in each case is precisely the same, the volume may be exactly the same, but we can certainly tell the difference between the clarinet and the violin. The reason is the difference in the overtone pattern of the two different vibrators (the string and the reed); and the two different resonators (the violin and the horn).

Loudness. We have seen that volume is a precisely measurable characteristic of sound. We may say that volume is an objective or scientific

measurement of sound. Loudness, on the other hand, is subjective. It is the *apparent volume* of the sound when heard by the human ear. This is a most important point, one that should be understood thoroughly. Keeping in mind, now, that volume is the objective or scientific measurement of a sound, and loudness is the subjective or apparent reaction of the human ear to the same sound, here is a more complete illustration by Harold Ennes:

Now assuming a fundamental of 392 cycles . . . with an actual intensity [volume] of 40 db¹ above reference level, (0 db) . . . the loudness level is approximately 36 db. It was determined in Bell Laboratories that the addition of the overtones or harmonics of the fundamental raised the intensity from 40 to 40.9 db, whereas the loudness level was raised from 36 to 44 db. In other words, the addition of the harmonics raises the actual meter reading only 0.9 db, while the loudness level *increases 8 db*. . . . When it is realized that the vocal organs of human beings are all exceedingly different, and are associated with a particular resonating apparatus that gives the voice its individual timbre [quality], it becomes clear why it often occurs that two voices peaked at a given meter reading [same volume] will sound far different in loudness. Certain harmonics of the voice are emphasized while others are suppressed in an infinite variety of degrees.²

Thus we see that the representative people who were participating in the panel thought that the volume of a particular pure tone was of less volume than it actually was. When the overtones were added, the actual volume was raised only 0.9 db, but to the persons listening it *seemed* to sound 8 db louder. It is this difference in the actual scientifically measured volume of sound, and the *apparent volume* or loudness of sound which plays such a big part in balancing the elements of the show (voice, sound, and music), and it certainly should be taken into consideration in dialogue scenes.

This then is a brief explanation of the physical makeup of sound. Sound has: pitch, volume, duration, quality, and loudness. Pitch is measured in frequency, volume and loudness in db, duration in rhythm, quality in harmonic pattern.

¹ Units of volume and loudness of sound are measured in decibels (db). The decibel scale is logarithmic, intricate in construction. It is necessary only to understand that the points on the scale are relative points.

² Harold E. Ennes, *Broadcast Operator's Handbook*, 1st ed. (New York: John F. Rider Publisher, Inc., 1947), pp. 8-9.

THE TOOLS OF THE TRADE

RADIO EQUIPMENT is designed to do or assist in one of three jobs:

1. Convert mechanical sound energy (which we have discussed above) to electrical energy.
2. Broadcast this electrical energy.
3. Convert broadcast electrical energy back into mechanical sound.

The radio player is concerned primarily with only the first group of tools. His major consideration is a good working knowledge of microphones and the studio characteristics which affect the mike pickup.

THE RADIO STUDIO

THE VIBRATIONS of a person's vocal cords plus the resonance of his individual sinus³ cavities combine to give him a voice of particular quality. The enclosure in which he speaks acts as a secondary resonator, and thus his voice sounds a little different in different surroundings. It will sound different in Studio A from in Studio B. It may even sound different in different places in the same studio. The actor who is speaking in clear ringing tones in a live studio will have to be more careful of his enunciation than he would be in a dead studio. No two studios are alike, and the actor and director should be familiar with the reverberational pattern of the studio to be used.

MICROPHONES

MICROPHONES are the most important tools the actor or director has. Other things equal, the player who has the best understanding of his tools is the one who is likely to turn out the best show. Knowing your microphones is one of the best insurance policies you can possess.

How mikes work. When one passes a piece of wire through the magnetic lines of force which operate between the poles of a horseshoe magnet, a small charge of electricity is generated in the wire. If the wire is left in the magnetic field and vibrated rapidly, more electricity would be generated in the wire. If vibrated less rapidly, less electricity would be generated. It is this principle upon which most broadcast microphones operate.

Let us get a few terms in mind which will make our understanding of microphone operation much easier.

Ribbon. The ribbon is a narrow strip of very thin corrugated duralumin (or similar substance) placed in the magnetic field in certain micro-

³ Actually, all head, throat, chest, and abdominal cavities contribute to the makeup of the quality of the voice. The sinus cavities, however, make the greatest contribution.

phones. This takes the place of the wire used in the above illustration.

Moving coil. Instead of a ribbon, a coil of wire is placed in the magnetic field in certain microphones.

Diaphragm. The diaphragm is a thin plate which is used in conjunction with a moving coil. The coil is attached to the back of the diaphragm, and as the diaphragm vibrates, the coil vibrates in the magnetic field.

Velocity principle of operation. If the moving element (in this case the ribbon) is actuated by the sound waves as they pass by or around the element, the element operates in accordance with the velocity of the waves as they pass by.⁴

Dynamic principle of operation. If the moving element (ribbon or diaphragm) is actuated by the sound waves as they strike or push against the surface of the element, the element operates in accordance with the pressure of the sound waves. For this reason, this type of operation is also called *pressure actuation*.

Each microphone is described according to the type of element it has, and how that element is operated. For example, we have the following combinations:

Ribbon-Velocity

Dynamic-Moving Coil

Ribbon with a combination of Dynamic and Velocity operation

Ribbon-Velocity and Dynamic-Moving Coil (two separate elements) in one housing (microphone case).

In the ribbon-velocity microphone, a metallic ribbon is placed in a magnetic field. The ribbon vibrates at the same frequency as the sound which is coming into the mike. Each time it vibrates, a minute charge of electricity is generated in it. Therefore, if we have a violin playing A 440, the ribbon will also vibrate 440 times per second, generating a current with a frequency of 440 cycles. This weak current is amplified (but the frequency is not changed) and broadcast. The radio in the home picks up the broadcast wave, the cone in the loudspeaker is vibrated 440 times per second, and the listener hears the same tone. We have a complete cycle of converting mechanical sound energy to electrical energy, and back to mechanical sound energy.

In the dynamic (or pressure-actuated)-moving coil mike, the coil of wire is attached to the back of a diaphragm. The coil of wire is suspended

⁴ Actually, the ribbon vibrates in accordance with the pressure gradients of the various sound waves which go by. The explanation is too technical for this space. For detailed information, the qualified student is referred to John G. Frayne and Halley Wolfe, *Elements of Sound Recording* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1949), and Harry F. Olson, *Elements of Acoustical Engineering* (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1940).

in a magnetic field, in much the same manner as the ribbon. When the violin plays A 440, the sound waves strike the diaphragm 440 times each second, thus vibrating it at the same speed. This in turn causes the coil to vibrate 440 times per second in the magnetic field, and an electrical current of 440 cycles is generated in the coil of wire. From there on, the process is the same as described above in the ribbon-velocity type mike.

Pickup patterns. The four major pickup patterns are: Uni-directional, Bi-directional, Non-directional, and Cardioid.

The pickup areas of a microphone are three dimensional. This is a most important point to keep in mind, for most diagrams show the cross-section of the pickup, not the true, three-dimensional field. It may make it clearer if we visualize the pickups as follows:

Uni-directional. A broad, squat cone whose point starts at the microphone and whose base is parallel to the diaphragm of the microphone.

Bi-directional. Two oranges held so that their sides nearly touch with the microphone between them. (Of course they would have to be very large oranges!)

Non-directional. Imagine that the microphone is in the middle of a large sphere.

Cardioid. If the microphone were small enough to place face down at the very base of the stem of an apple, the apple would closely resemble the pickup area.

The microphonic element (the ribbon or diaphragm) may be either free or partially dampened. When the element is dampened, there are baffles which control the ingress of the sound vibrations, thus changing the pickup characteristic of the mike. A free ribbon (or velocity) element is always bi-directional. A free dynamic (pressure-actuated) element is always non-directional. By combining in various degrees the outputs of the two elements (in combination mikes), by use of different dampeners, or by electrical means, different pickup patterns are obtainable. These will be given in detail under each microphone description.

What the microphone does. The ideal microphone (which, incidentally, has not yet been invented) would pick up a sound and reproduce it exactly as it is heard by the human ear. These conditions would obtain:

Any sound from 16 to 16,000 cycles would be picked up and accurately reproduced in pitch.

It would be picked up in the exact volume relationship to other sounds that existed at the point of pickup.

If we made a graph with the ordinates in terms of volume (db) and the abscissa in terms of pitch (frequency in cycles per second), the perfect

microphone would have a frequency response curve which was a straight line.

Each maker of microphones tries to approximate this straight line, but individual microphone characteristics make the frequency response curve an uneven curve. All other things being equal, the manufacturer aims for the "flattest curve," in other words, he tries to get as close to the straight line frequency response curve as possible. The frequency response curve of each microphone is given under specific microphone descriptions.

The distance of the sound source from the microphone and its placement in the pickup pattern also affects the volume with which the microphone picks it up. If we have two sound sources, one at 3000 cycles and the other at 10,000 cycles, operating side by side with the same volume and loudness, the perfect microphone would pick them up with the same volume. But most microphones would pick them up with varying volume, depending upon the placement in the pickup pattern. It is important that the radio player have some idea of the characteristics of each mike in respect to frequency response characteristics. Directional frequency response characteristics are given for each microphone under specific microphone descriptions below.

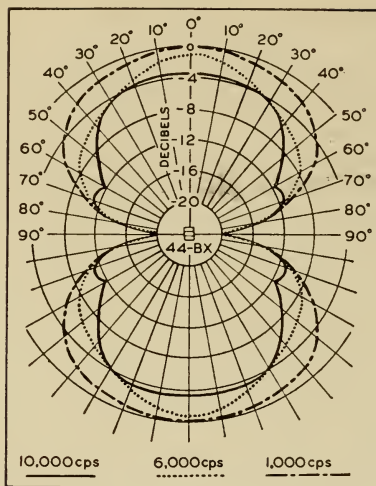
A general word. There is no "best" microphone. If a mike could be made which was binaural (i.e., it picked up the same as your two ears, and if those two separate pickups could be broadcast, received, and reproduced so that the sound was exactly the same as in real life) then we would have a perfect microphone. But all microphones are imperfect to some small measure, and we therefore say that one mike is better than the others for a certain job, under certain conditions. It is for this reason that the microphones must be individually studied and understood.

THE RCA 44-BX

The RCA 44-BX, or Senior Velocity, as it is commonly called, has as its microphonic element a thin ribbon of duralumin suspended between the poles of a permanent magnet. Because of its lightness, the motion of this ribbon corresponds almost exactly to the velocity of the air particles. It is open on all sides, allowing free ingress and egress of sound waves, and there is therefore little if any cavity resonance (no imprisoned sound, bouncing back and forth as in a rocky canyon).

The pickup is bi-directional, as may be seen from the accompanying diagram, and with the exception of the RCA KB-2C, this mike has the most uniform bi-directional pattern, i.e., each side of the "figure 8" pickup is uniform with the other side.

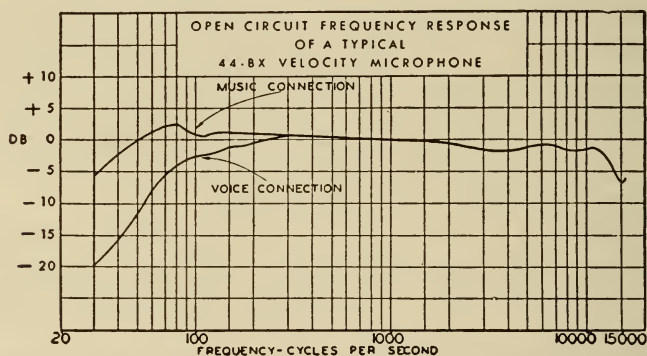
Its frequency response is exceptionally good (30-15,000 cps (cycles per second)). Its frequency response curve is practically flat between 100



Directional Characteristics of a Typical RCA 44-BX Ribbon-Velocity Microphone.

cycles and 10,000 cycles, the complete broadcast spectrum insofar as AM radio is concerned.

The RCA 44-BX is an excellent studio mike because of its fidelity, but the thin and delicate ribbon element makes it less suitable for remote work. It will stand less punishment than many mikes. It should never be used on an outside remote, for any wind, even stray breezes, will play havoc with the ribbon. And speaking of stray breezes, let us repeat: No microphone should ever be blown into for testing or any other purposes. This microphone may be damaged easily by blowing into it. The ribbon will be broken or strained out of position.



Frequency Response of a Typical RCA 44-BX Ribbon-Velocity Microphone.

The 44-BX is an excellent mike for dramatic work for several reasons:

1. Its bi-directional pattern makes possible the placing of actors on each side of the mike. A closer communication between the actors may usually be achieved if they speak directly to each other.

2. The sharp fade areas (see directional characteristic patterns) on the dead sides of the mike are extremely useful for fades on and off. A distinct and highly realistic fade on may be obtained by speaking the first words outside of the pickup area, then circling around till you are speaking directly into the mike.

3. The fade areas may also be used for placement in crowd pickups. Notice in the directional characteristic pattern, that different physical perspectives may be obtained by careful placement according to basic voice pitch.

Any ribbon mike has a tendency to attenuate the high frequencies, especially when the sound source is close to the mike. The 44-BX is easily the worst offender. But this characteristic makes for another advantage in dramatic work, in that the microphone may be "played to" to advantage. (By "playing the mike" is meant moving closer or farther away as the occasion demands.) Thus in a particularly confidential or intimate scene, the actor may come close to the mike, and the resultant pickup will attenuate or lessen the highs, leaving the lower tones predominant. This apparent emphasis of the lows makes for a more intimate quality.

In this microphone there is an arrangement whereby the pickup of lower frequencies may be boosted or lessened. This arrangement compensates for the ribbon characteristic which emphasizes the lower frequencies when the sound source is very close to the mike. The nature of the difference in the frequency response of the microphone is shown by the lines labeled "music connection" and "voice connection" on page 396. If the mike is set on "voice," the actor should play a little closer. If it is set on "music," the actor should play a little farther away. There is, however, no way to tell which way the mike is set, for the strapping is adjustable only when the base of the microphone is removed, and thus is not discernible by the actor as it is in the KB-2C and the 77 series. If it is important that the actor or director know whether the bass response is on voice or music, the only way to find out is to ask the engineer to check it.

The manufacturer of this microphone recommends that the playing area should be between 2½ to 3 feet from the mike. This is undoubtedly correct for optimum conditions, but in most studios for the average voice in an average scene the actor should not be more than two feet from the mike.

The best results are obtained by speaking directly into the microphone. If you are playing very close to the mike, then it is ordinarily best that you

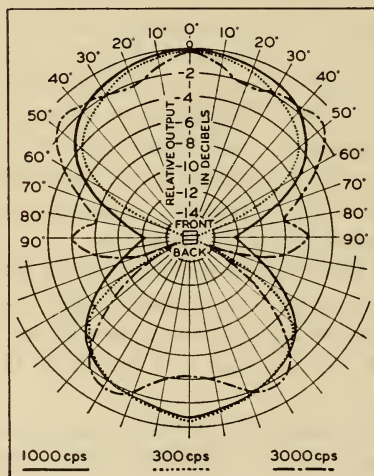
work across mike, at an angle of 60 to 90 degrees. The reason for this is that unless you have extraordinary breath control, if you speak directly into the mike at close range, the blast of air from your lips, especially on d's, p's, t's, b's, and s's, will cause the ribbon to be violently agitated, destroying its sensitive pickup. What actually happens is that the ribbon is affected by pressure, rather than velocity. Hence the distortion of the sound. By working cross mike, these little puffs of air go across the surface of the mike, not headlong into the ribbon.

When working close on any mike, the actor must be especially careful of mouth noises—those little clicks and clacks and glubps which are never noticed unless they are highly amplified. This the mike does.

The RCA 44-BX is a very delicate, sensitive microphone, and is easy to blast. On any sudden volume peaks it is necessary to partially turn away from the mike. It is shock mounted (has a rubber cushion inserted between microphones and stand), and is mounted in a yoke so that it may be tilted up or down. Remember though, that it is always bi-directional, and if it is tilted so that the pickup of one side is slanted down, the pickup on the other side will be slanted up. This feature may be used to advantage if there is great difference in the height of the opposite actors. The tall man and the short girl will each be "on the beam."

THE RCA 74-B

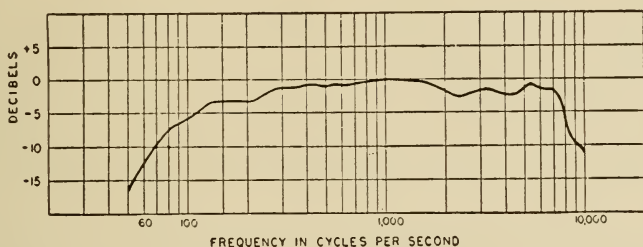
The RCA 74-B is commonly called the Junior Velocity (mike). It operates on the same velocity principle as the 44-BX which it closely resembles in appearance, but it is less sensitive than the larger mike (50-9000 cps). It is a smaller mike, mounted on ball and socket joint



Directional Characteristics of a Typical RCA 74-B Ribbon-Velocity Microphone.

rather than in a yoke, and lacks the shock-type mounting of the senior velocity. The ball and socket joint allows it to be tilted about 70 degrees in any direction.

The pickup pattern of the 74-B is bi-directional, but due to the construction and shielding of the microphonic element, the opposite sides of the pickup pattern are not uniform, as may easily be seen by studying the directional characteristic diagram. Because of the difference in pickups on the front and back sides (the mike line emerges from the back side) it is usually better to work from the front, if only one person is on mike. If two are on mike, the person with the higher-pitched voice should speak into the front, while the lower voice should speak into the back. This will more nearly compensate for the inherent distortion.



Frequency Response of a Typical RCA 74-B Ribbon-Velocity Microphone.

The junior velocity has no compensating strap or switch for music and voice. A comparison of its frequency response curve with those of the 44-BX and KB-2C shows that it more nearly resembles the voice pickup. This means that the performer will generally play fairly close (1-1½ feet) to the mike.

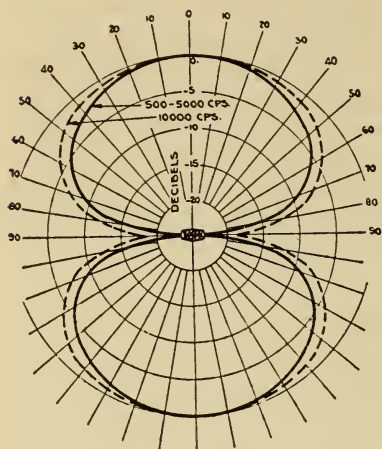
The frequency response curve of the 74-B is rather irregular, but not so irregular as to produce much noticeable distortion by the time it is broadcast and received. The best microphone placement will generally be straight into the mike from the front, or about 20 degrees off to the side from the rear.

THE RCA KB-2C

The RCA KB-2C, or Bantam (or Bantam Velocity) mike, as it is commonly called, is a miniature velocity-type microphone which is similar in most respects to the 44-BX described above. It has a bi-directional pickup pattern which is very regular.

The greatest difference between the 44-BX and the KB-2C is in the frequency response. The 44-BX is good from 30-15,000 cps, while the

KB-2C is most effective between 50-10,000 cps. This latter range is of course adequate for most broadcast work. The frequency response curve under optimum conditions is nearly flat between 100 cycles and 7000

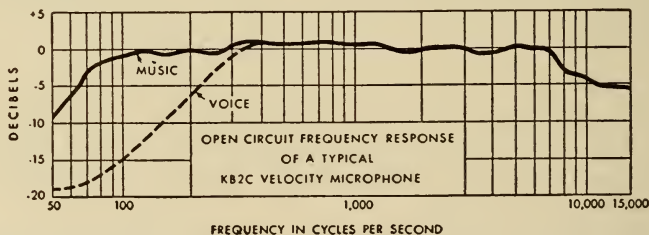


Directional Characteristics of a Typical RCA KB-2C Ribbon-Velocity Microphone.

cycles, not nearly so good as the 44-BX, but adequate for AM broadcasting.

The microphone may be tilted forward or backward through an angle of approximately 30 degrees, which makes it less adaptable than either the 44-BX or 74-B.

Its small size (weight: less than a pound) makes it convenient to handle and transport. It is inconspicuous, and may be used quite well as a hidden mike on a TV set. In radio, however, especially radio drama, actors have been known to have trouble adjusting to it both physically and psychologically. Both the 74-B and the 44-BX have much more bulk, and it is generally easier mentally to project the pickup pattern lines in these mikes than in the KB-2C. Then too, the substance of the first named microphones may inspire in the actor a little more purpose and direction. This is a moot question, however.



Frequency Response of a Typical RCA KB-2C Ribbon-Velocity Microphone.

On the side of the case of the KB-2C is a two-position screwdriver type switch for selecting the bass response for voice or music (see data on 44-BX). The difference in the response to different frequencies is shown in the frequency response chart on page 400. RCA suggests that the voice position is useful for performers who must work close to the mike, or in studios with long reverberation periods at low frequencies. For the average studio and average performer in a radio play, the better position is probably music. If the switch is on music, extreme care should be taken on intimate scenes, for high frequency attenuation is especially noticeable in close perspective. A good rule of thumb: If the switch is set on voice, play a little closer; if it is on music, play a little farther back.

THE RCA KB-3A

The RCA KB-3A is a high fidelity, noise-cancelling, ribbon microphone which is used for close-talk purposes. It has a bi-directional pickup pattern, and in appearance is quite similar to the KB-2C. The close-talk feature of this microphone is its greatest asset. In order to assure the greatest fidelity and discrimination against unwanted noise, the source of sound should be between $\frac{3}{4}$ inches and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the microphone. In ordinary use, the person speaking should be from one to six inches from the microphone.

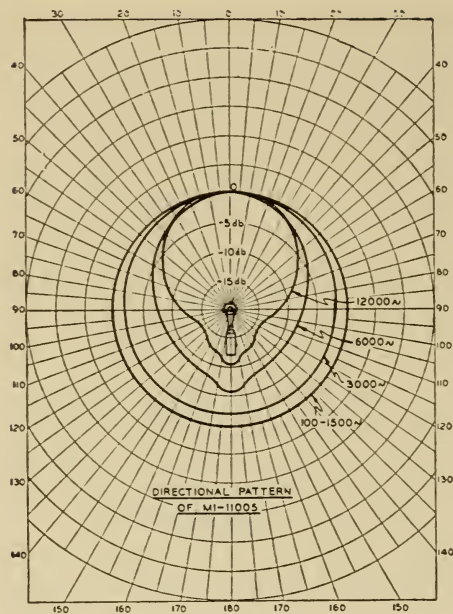
This microphone has less sensitivity to wind and breath puffs than any other ribbon microphone in general use. It is particularly good for audience shows, where a public address system is used, for the feedback from the loudspeaker is much less noticeable (often cancelled out entirely). It would seldom be used as a cast mike for a radio dramatic show, but under certain circumstances could be used as a sound or filter mike. The bass response switch, a three-position, screwdriver-type control, is located on the side of the microphone case in the same position as that of the KB-2C.

THE RCA BK-4A

The RCA BK-4A, "Starmaker," is a pressure-actuated ribbon microphone with fairly uniform frequency response between 50-15,000 cps.

The BK-4A is essentially non-directional, particularly in the lower frequencies, as is seen in the directional characteristic diagram on the following page. Its weight (about one pound), small size, and portability make it a good mike for roving use. It is fairly free from wind blast and air rumble and has high resistance to mechanical shock.

In working this mike, the best results are generally obtained when the source of sound is at about 90 degrees "off beam." That is, a person using it generally speaks across the top of the horn, when the microphone is held or mounted in a vertical position.



*Directional Characteristics of the
RCA BK-4A Ribbon-Pressure
Microphone.*

THE WESTERN ELECTRIC 618A

The WE 618A is a pressure-actuated, moving coil microphone. The 618A is one of the most rugged mikes ever made. First models came out in 1931, and so strongly were they built that many are still operating, although Western Electric has long discontinued the line.

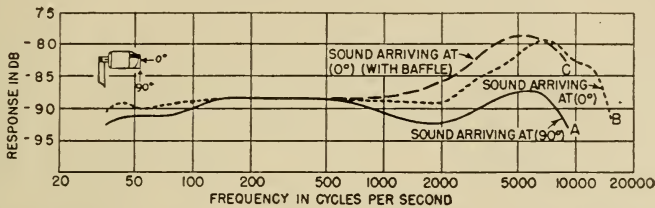
The 618A is much less sensitive than more modern mikes, but it does not pick up wind noises, and handling the mike produces little noise. These features make it an excellent mike for remote work. Though it does not blast easily, it is abnormally sensitive to middle frequencies, and plosives; hissing "s's" and mouth noises are amplified when one speaks directly into the mike. Most persons get the best results working at about 45 degrees off the direct beam.

Like all pressure-actuated mikes, the 618A is theoretically non-directional, but like all of them, it is more or less directional in that sounds coming directly into the front of the mike register stronger than those from the sides or rear.

THE WESTERN ELECTRIC 633A

The Western Electric 633A or "saltshaker" is a pressure-actuated moving coil microphone. It is a rugged and dependable mike, useful in some cases because of its peculiar frequency response pattern, but little used

as a cast or music mike in dramatic shows. The pickup pattern is essentially non-directional, with, however, some variations. A baffle plate designed for this particular microphone may be attached to make it more



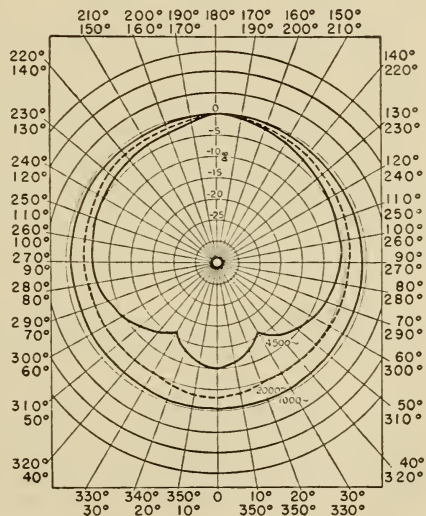
Typical Field Response for Western Electric 633A Dynamic Microphone.

directional. As the accompanying frequency response figure indicates, sounds in the 6000-8000 cycle range are given an abnormal boost. This means that the actor or announcer who uses this mike will be extremely careful of his sibilants and mouth noises, many of which occur in this range, as do noises produced by rustling scripts. The saltshaker accentuates these, making them appear even more prominent than they are. For best results, the person speaking into this mike should speak across the face of it at about a ninety degree angle.

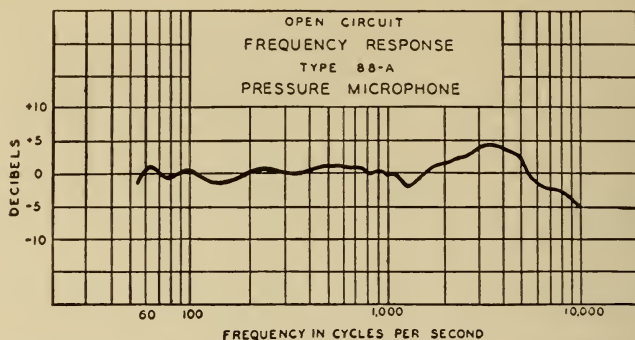
THE RCA 88-A

The RCA 88-A is a pressure-actuated moving coil microphone. It is non-directional, yet as is shown just below, that sound which enters

Directional Characteristics of a Typical RCA 88-A Pressure Microphone.



the microphone directly from the front is predominant. Thus the mike can be partially aimed at close range. That is to say, a person speaking into the front of the mike would probably dominate the rest of the pickup.



Frequency Response of a Typical RCA 88-A Pressure Microphone.

This microphone has a good frequency response from 60-10,000 cps. It is small, light weight, and is an exceptionally good microphone for general remote work, inasmuch as it is very little affected by wind or moisture. It is also often used as a studio mike for round tables. In dramatic work, it is more often used as a sound mike, or filter mike.

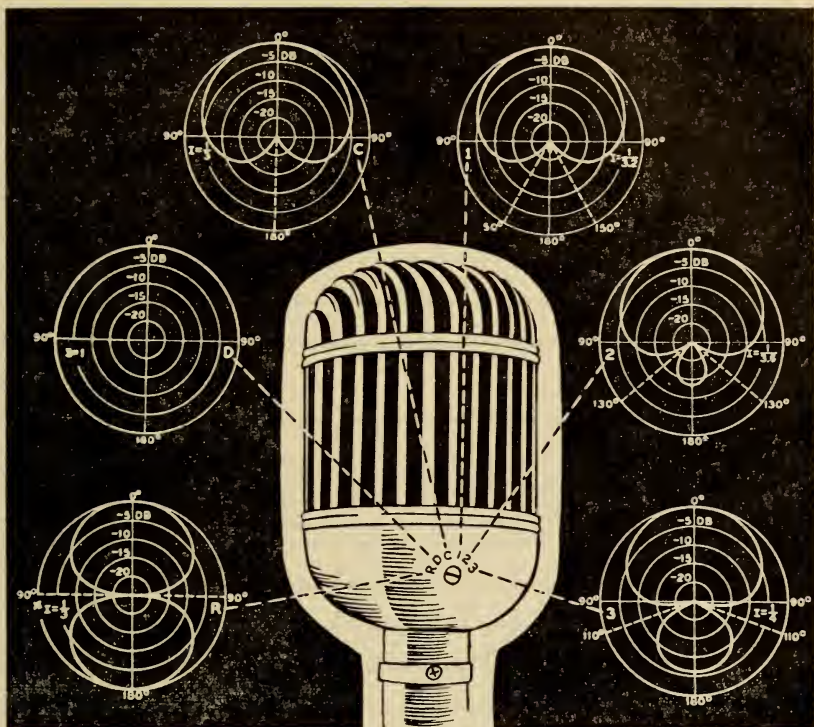
THE WESTERN ELECTRIC 639A

THE WESTERN ELECTRIC 639B

The principle of operation in these two microphones is the same, and, except for the number of pickup patterns possible to each, there is little difference in the two mikes. They will therefore be discussed together.

The Western Electric 639 series is commonly called the Western Electric Cardioid mike. It gets its name from the heart-shaped pickup pattern which, as its primary pickup, has become its most famous feature. The 639A has three possible patterns; the 639B has six. They are described below. The microphonic element is a dual one. Inside of the microphone case are two microphonic elements which may be used separately, or in combination with each other. In the upper half of the mike is a ribbon velocity element, and in the lower half is a dynamic moving coil pressure element.

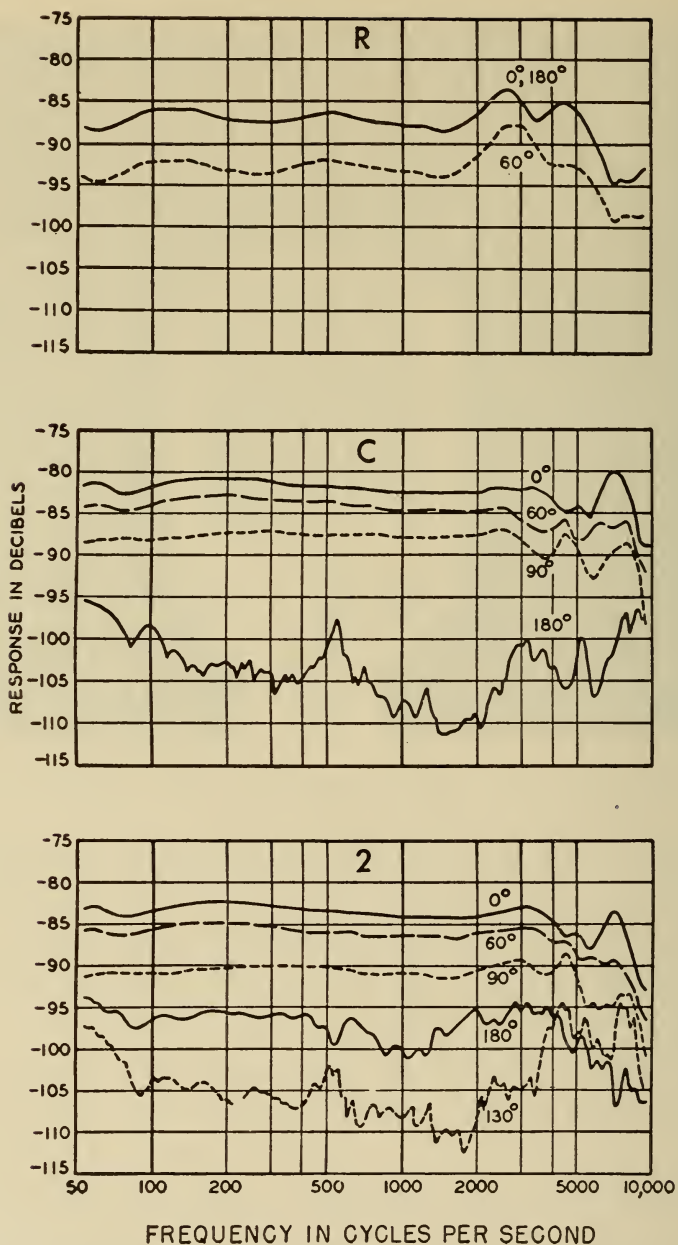
The pickup patterns are variable, as is seen in the accompanying diagram (opposite page), and are selected by a screwdriver-type switch located in the back of the housing. When the switch is set on R, only the ribbon is in operation, thus the pickup is bi-directional. When the switch



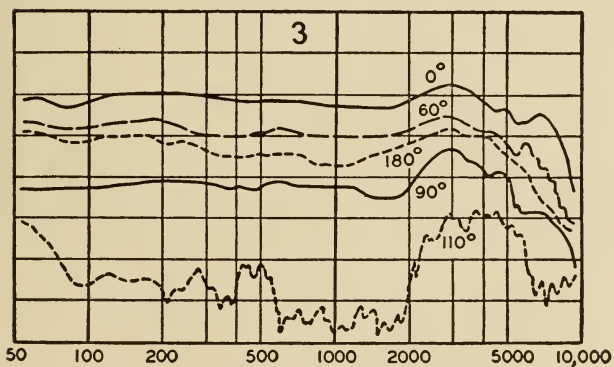
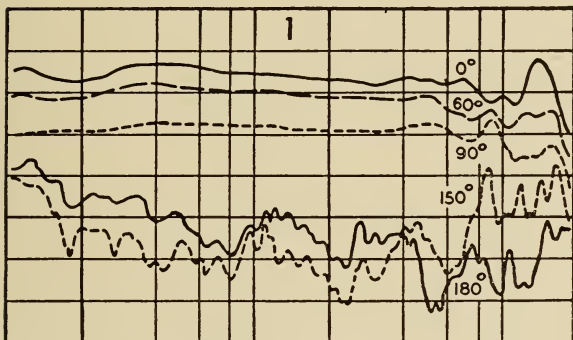
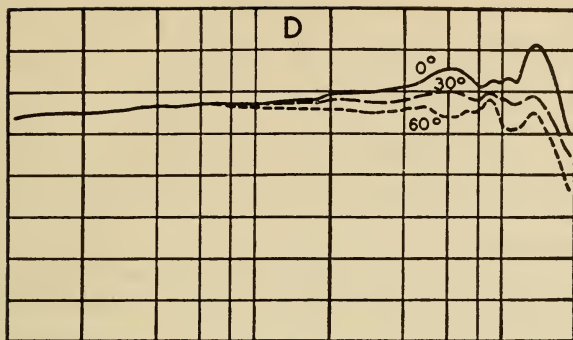
Selectivity Patterns of a Typical Western Electric 639B Cardioid Microphone.

is on D, only the dynamic or pressure-actuated element is in operation, resulting in a non-directional pickup pattern. When the switch is on C, both the ribbon and dynamic elements are in operation. Sounds originating in front of the microphone are reproduced with maximum volume and fidelity, but sounds originating in the rear of the mike actuate the two elements so that the outputs of each are out of phase and tend to cancel each other. The resultant pickup is uni-directional in a roughly heart-shaped or cardioid pattern.

These three patterns, cardioid, bi-directional, and non-directional are those of which the 639A is capable. The 639B produces these three patterns also, but has in addition three cardioid variations as is seen in the figure above. These variations provide for specific directional patterns which provide for minimum responses at certain points. On position 1, the two 150-degree angle areas are the areas of least response. On position 2, the minimum response is at the 130-degree angles, and in position



Frequency Response Curves Corresponding to Selectivity Patterns R, C, and 2 of a Typical Western Electric 639B Cardioid Microphone.



FREQUENCY IN CYCLES PER SECOND

Frequency Response Curves Corresponding to Selectivity Patterns D, 1, and 3 of a Typical Western Electric 639B Cardioid Microphone.

3, the minimum responses are at the 110-degree positions. On patterns 2 and 3, the 180-degree response grows successively larger.

The 639 is an excellent all-purpose mike in that the frequency response in most of its patterns is quite even from 50-5000 cycles. They are not so even between 5000-10,000 cycles, the upper limit of the microphone. Though there is little difference in the volume of the 0-180-degree positions in the bi-directional pattern, there is a noticeable difference in the quality when the two are compared. The same is true of varied sound positions when pickup patterns 1, 2, and 3 are used.

For this reason, 639's are generally used on the cardioid position whenever possible. A glance at the frequency response curve will indicate why most actors like to play this mike at about a 60 degree position. There is little attenuation either of the highs or the lows on the 639, especially when it is set on cardioid. This makes it most useful for close-in work. If the actor or announcer is too close, however, some attenuation of the highs will be noticed. Because there is little attenuation, however, no strapping or switching arrangement for separate music or voice pickups are necessary. In tonal reproduction it compares very favorably with the best ribbon mikes.

THE RCA 77 SERIES

The RCA 77 series employs a combination of velocity and pressure-actuated elements to obtain a variety of patterns:

The 77-A has a cardioid pattern only.

The 77-B also has just one pattern—the cardioid.

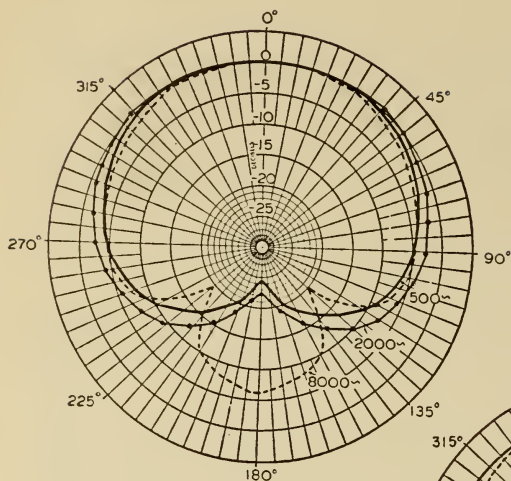
The 77-C has three possible patterns—cardioid, bi-directional, and non-directional.

The 77-D has six possible patterns—cardioid, bi-directional, non-directional, and three modified cardioid patterns.

Production on the 77-A and 77-B has long been discontinued. Comparatively few of these are in service. Production on the 77-C was halted by World War II. After the war, the 77-D replaced the C model, and is the most common of the 77 series.

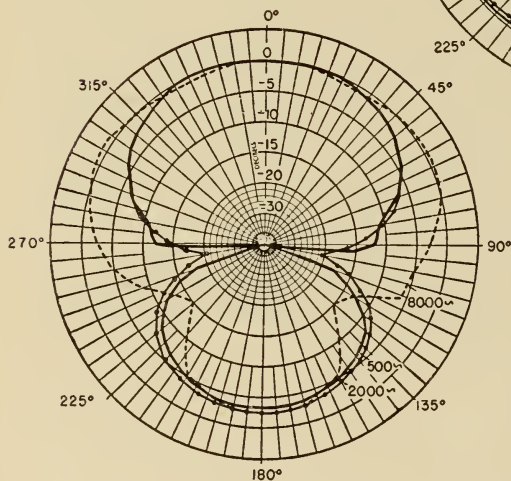
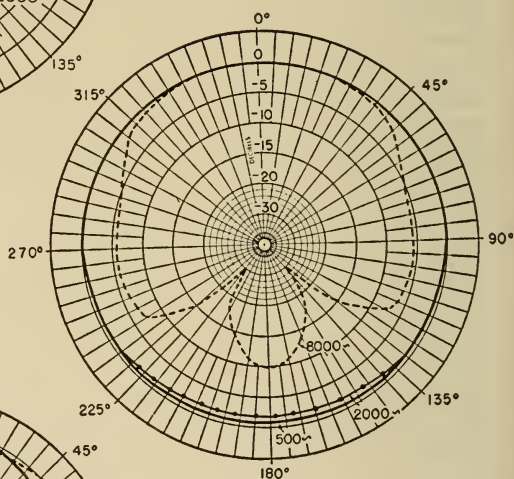
The 77-D, commonly called the polydirectional or cardioid, is a ribbon mike. A rotary shutter mechanism inside the case of the microphone makes it possible to vary the amount of sound originating in the rear of the mike which can reach the back side of the ribbon. This rotating shutter is controlled by a screwdriver-type switch on the back of the microphone case; thus the changes in pickup patterns are made mechanically, as contrasted to the 639 which employs electrical means. When, in the 77-D, the arrow on the switch points at "U," the shutter is partially open, and the pattern is uni-directional in the cardioid shape. When the switch is set at "N," the aperture is closed, and the ribbon acts as a pressure element; thus the pattern is non-directional. When the switch is set at "B," the aperture is completely open; thus the ribbon operates on the velocity principle, and the pattern is bi-directional. The other patterns are modified cardioids which roughly correspond to those on the 639B. A look at the directional characteristic patterns on page 410 will show why most qualified directors use the 77-D only on the cardioid pattern. In an effort to produce a microphone which is adaptable to many conditions, as the 77-D admittedly is, some fidelity must be lost. Like the WE 639B, the RCA 77-D is most effective on the cardioid or uni-directional position.

The bass response switch is at the direct bottom of the microphone case, and it also is screwdriver-operated. It is a three-position switch. Its operation is similar to that described for the KB-2C.



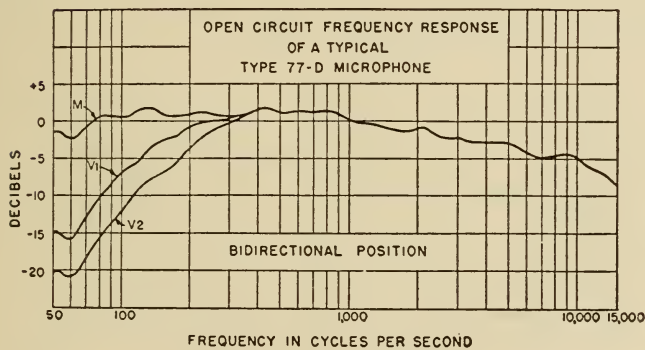
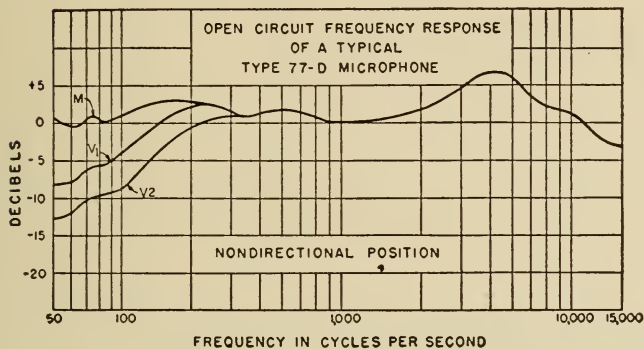
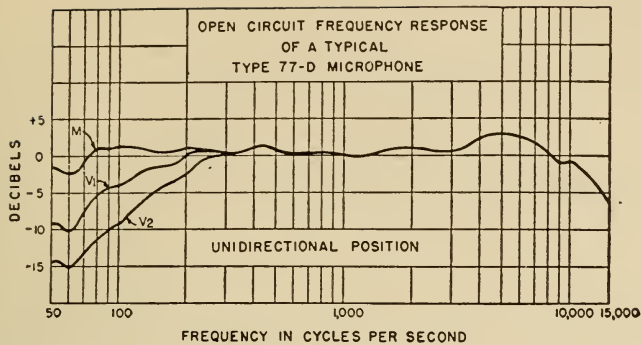
Directional Response Pattern of a Typical RCA 77-D Set on Unidirectional.

Directional Response Pattern of a Typical RCA 77-D Set on Nondirectional.



Directional Response Pattern of a Typical RCA 77-D Set on Bidirectional.

Primary Directional Response Patterns of a Typical RCA 77-D Polydirectional Microphone.



Primary Frequency Response Curves of a Typical RCA 77-D Polydirectional Microphone.

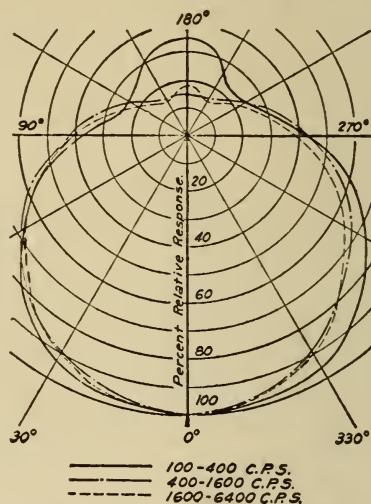
412 MICROPHONES

SHURE 556 (SUPER CARDIOID)

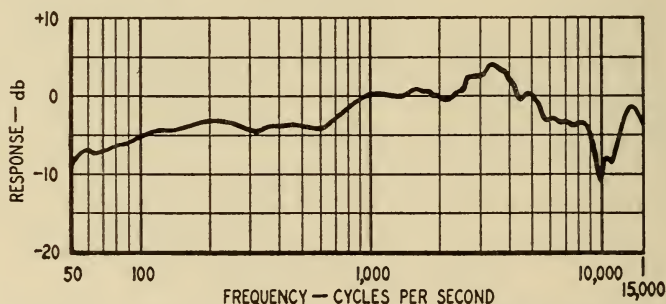
SHURE 55 (CARDIOID)

Both of these microphones are of the moving-coil dynamic type. Each looks quite similar to the other. Most stations which are equipped with Shure cardioids invest in a 556, but some stations are equipped with 55's, a cheaper and less sensitive mike. Both microphones are highly uni-directional and cannot be made otherwise. The use of the screwdriver switch

Directional Characteristics of a Typical Shure 556 "Supercardioid" Dynamic Microphone.



in the rear of the mike case should not be confused with that of the WE 639 or the RCA 77-D. In the Shure mike, this switch is used to change impedances, not pickup patterns. The pickup of the Shure Cardioid (55) or Super Cardioid (556) is always in the cardioid pattern. The actor should generally speak directly into the mike.



Frequency Response of a Typical Shure 556 "Supercardioid" Dynamic Microphone.

The microphonic element of the 556 is shock mounted internally, and the mike itself is mounted on a swivel which allows the head to be tilted through an angle of 90 degrees. For the average voice the playing distance from the mike should be about one foot.

THE CONDENSER MICROPHONES

A condenser mike operates on the principle of induced voltage between one plate and another one which is mounted parallel to it. A diaphragm is connected to one plate, and when it is vibrated by the sound waves striking it, it vibrates the plate to which it is attached. As this plate vibrates toward and from the parallel plate (which is carrying the electricity), it picks up, by capacity reactance, varying amounts of electricity from the other plate. This electrical pattern is representative of the pattern of sound waves which are striking the diaphragm.

Condenser mikes are used primarily in large studio work for picking up large groups, especially orchestras. It has also achieved some stature in television broadcasting. Because it is small (about one inch each way) it approaches the ideal of a "point pickup" apparatus—one which lessens phase distortion created by sound waves striking different parts of the diaphragm at the same time. The condenser mike is used in conjunction with an amplifier, which is attached directly to the microphone.

This microphone is non-directional, quite sensitive, and has a fairly flat response curve. Because its primary use is for picking up groups in a large space, it is seldom used for straight dramatic work as a cast or sound mike. Its sensitivity and non-directional characteristics make it impossible to work ordinary fades. This type of microphone is made by several companies, notably Western Electric (WE 640AA), and Altec (Altec 21B).

CONDENSED SUMMARY OF MICROPHONE

<i>Type</i>	<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Microphonic Element</i>	<i>Operation</i>	<i>Pickup</i>
RCA 44-BX	Velocity (Senior Velocity)	Ribbon	Velocity	Bi-directional only
RCA 74-B	Junior Velocity	Ribbon	Velocity	Bi-directional only
RCA KB-2C	Bantam (Bantam Velocity)	Ribbon	Velocity	Bi-directional only
RCA 88-A		Moving coil	Pressure-actuated (Dynamic)	Non-directional
RCA 77-A		Ribbon	Combination velocity and pressure-actuated	Cardioid only
RCA 77-B	Cardioid	Ribbon	Combination velocity and pressure-actuated	Cardioid only
RCA 77-C		Ribbon	Combination velocity and pressure-actuated	Adjustable—cardioid, non-directional, bi-directional
RCA 77-D	Poly-directional	Ribbon	Combination velocity and pressure-actuated	Adjustable—cardioid, non-directional, bi-directional, three modified cardioid patterns

CHARACTERISTICS AND USES

<i>Frequency Response</i>	<i>Uses</i>	<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
30-15,000 cps	Particularly good in almost all studio work, especially as cast mike in dramatic shows.	Excellent frequency response, which is practically flat. Sharp fade areas. Symmetrical pickup patterns, front and rear.	Cannot be used on outside remote. Particularly susceptible to wind. Is more easily damaged than most mikes.
50-9,000 cps	Same as above.	Sharp fade areas.	Only fair frequency response. Non-symmetrical pickup patterns in front and rear. Otherwise, same as above.
50-10,000 cps	Same as above. Also used as hidden mike.	Small, light weight. Good frequency response. Symmetrical pickup pattern, front and rear. Easily accessible bass response switch.	Lacks bulk, creating a psychological hurdle for actors. Otherwise same as 44-BX above.
60-10,000 cps	Excellent remote mike. Good studio mike for roundtables, announce, or sound mike.	Good frequency response. Little affected by wind or moisture.	Will not pick up less than 60 cps.
	Audience pickup.		Quite large and heavy.
	Announce, sound, music.	Can be used in places where back-slap of sound or feed-back occurs.	
	Studio mike. Voice, music, or sound.	Three pickup patterns.	Loss of quality on all except cardioid position.
50-10,000 cps	Studio mike. Voice, music, or sound.	Six pickup patterns. Three position bass response switch. Can be set to eliminate undesirable sounds from certain directions.	Fall off in quality on all except cardioid position.

CONDENSED SUMMARY OF MICROPHONE

<i>Type</i>	<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Microphonic Element</i>	<i>Operation</i>	<i>Pickup</i>
WE 618A	Coffee cup	Moving coil	Pressure-actuated	Non-directional
WE 633A	Salt shaker	Moving coil	Pressure-actuated	Non-directional (semi-directional with baffle)
WE 639A	Cardioid	Combination—Ribbon and Moving coil	Combination velocity and pressure-actuated	Adjustable—cardioid bi-directional non-directional
WE 639B	Six-way cardioid	Combination—Ribbon and Moving coil	Combination velocity and pressure-actuated	Adjustable—cardioid bi-directional, non-directional, Three modified cardioid patterns
Altec 21B	Miniature mike	Condenser	Condenser	Non-directional
Shure 55	Cardioid	Moving coil	Pressure-actuated	Cardioid only
Shure 556	Super Cardioid	Moving coil	Pressure-actuated	Cardioid only

CHARACTERISTICS AND USES (*Continued*)

<i>Frequency Response</i>	<i>Uses</i>	<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
40-10,000 cps	Remote.	Rugged construction, does not blast easily, relatively insensitive to wind and moisture.	Emphasizes plosives and sibilants. Limited frequency range.
40-10,000 cps	Studio—sound or round table.	Non-directional or semi-directional.	Emphasizes sibilants and plosives. Uneven frequency response.
40-10,000 cps	All studio uses. Some remote uses.	Is a little more rugged than most ribbon mikes. Can be transported if necessary. Three pickup patterns. Easily accessible pattern switch.	Loss of quality on all except cardioid position.
40-10,000 cps	Same as above.	Same as above, except that it has six pickup patterns.	Same as above.
	May be used anywhere point pickup is desired. Often used for orchestral pickup.	Small size, does not blast easily.	No fade areas; proximity of sound is shown in the quality of the output. Is almost "too live" in certain studios.
60-10,000 cps	Primarily public address, but sometimes used for announce mike. Good for sound effect use.	Quite rugged. Sharp fade areas. Can be used in places where feed-back is bad. Good for remotes. Little affected by moisture.	Not broadcast quality. Irregular frequency response pattern.
50-15,000 cps	Studio and remote. Broadcast quality.	Same as above.	Broadcast quality, but frequency response curve is somewhat irregular.

B

Topics for discussion and suggested assignments

Chapter 2

1. Examine a book or play and the corresponding radio adaptation. How are the visual elements adapted so that they can be comprehended by the ear? (*Theatre Guild on the Air*, edited by H. William Fitelson, will furnish several excellent adaptations.)
2. Listen to several commercial dramatic programs. How are the commercials integrated with the script? Is an attempt made to keep the mood and spirit of the show intact? After the middle commercial, how are we led back into the show? How could the commercial be made more effective?
3. Discuss a specific dramatic radio show in terms of characterization. Does the story seem to be the natural consequence of the character's thoughts and actions, or does the plot seem to dominate the characters? How are the characters introduced? Do they come in abruptly, or is reference made to them in advance? Which way seems more effective? Does each character fill a particular need in the play, helping to round out the action?
4. Compare the following general audience studies: *The People Look at Radio*, by Lazarsfeld and Field (University of North Carolina Press, 1946); and *Radio Listening in America*, by Lazarsfeld and Kendall (Prentice-Hall, 1948). What changes in audience tastes and attitudes toward dramatic programs are apparent? If possible, obtain copies of continuing audience studies for the past three or four years. Does there seem to be a trend in listener interest in dramatic programs? (The continuing studies of Dr. Forrest L. Whan of the Iowa and Kansas audiences contain excellent material for this topic.)

Chapter 3

Listen, either individually or in class, to two or three dramatic radio shows. Write or discuss your impressions of each in terms of the following topics and questions.

1. How was compression used? Did you ever feel that you were being "rushed along" with the play? Did you feel that the story or characters suffered because of the compression? Why or why not?
2. Did all of the inherently visual elements of the play come across? If not, how might they have been presented to better advantage? If they did, try to discover how the effect of reality was achieved.
3. Was your attention immediately attracted and held? If not, how could the opening have been improved?
4. How was the exposition developed? Was the play developed by plot or episode? Did each scene logically follow the preceding one and lead logically into the next one?
5. What was the nature of the play? The reason it was done? Did the general mood and production of the show contribute to the theme? What contributions were made in the way the actors played their roles?
6. Write down the details of the show which impressed you most, then divide these details into five groups—story, characters, dialogue, theme or idea (such things as "social significance" would be included in this group), and production aspects (music, sound, particular effects such as echoes and filters, etc.). Which group seems to be the strongest? How do the points under one heading seem to reinforce and strengthen those in another—for instance, how did some particular background music reinforce a certain bit of dialogue, or how did the actions of a particular character make the story more believable?
7. How complicated was the story? Were any of the characters difficult to identify or follow? Was the dialogue clear and easy to understand? Was the action clear and easy to follow?
8. Was the overall listening experience a satisfying one? If you had been presenting the show, what changes, if any, would you have made in the script or production? Why?

Chapter 4

1. Compare the scenes from "Camille," given in this chapter, with the same scenes in translations of the original book and stage play. What are the major differences? How has the diction (choice of

words) been changed for a modern audience? What elements in the original are difficult to incorporate in a radio adaptation? How has the scene been slanted to the present day radio audience?

2. Listen to several programs of the type of "Inner Sanctum," "Suspense," "The Shadow," "Mystery Theatre," "Gangbusters," "Drag-net," or "Mr. District Attorney." In general, what do these programs have in common? How are they different? Compare the different types of plot, characters, and dialogue. How does the mood and approach differ? What means are used to stimulate listener interest? How do they compare in action? In theme? Would some of these shows appeal, more than the others, to a somewhat critical audience? Why or why not?
3. Some persons believe that radio has destroyed the Meredith concept of comedy, that of "thoughtful laughter." Have you heard any radio plays recently which refute this criticism? What factors in mass communication media tend to standardize comedy approaches?
4. Listen critically to some of the higher ranking comedy shows and point out the more prominent comedy devices. Are the preponderance of them high comedy or low comedy? Does there seem to be any difference in the intended audiences of the shows featuring high comedy and those with a preponderance of low comedy?
5. How does the primary or intended audience affect the style in which a show is presented? How is the style affected by literary type and subject matter? Would it be affected by commercial aspects? How?
6. What is the difference between romance (as content material), and romanticism (as a style)? Discuss romanticism as a contributive factor toward the raising or lowering of dramatic program standards.
7. Describe those devices of realism which are predominant in present-day radio drama. How do they contribute to the over-all approach and effect? What general types or groupings of shows are the most realistic? What makes them so? Notice some of the sound effects used. How close do they come to the actual sounds in real life?
8. What role does sentimentalism play in the overall dramatic program structure of radio? Do daytime and nighttime shows differ in their approach to sentiment? How about shows aimed at different age, sex, and cultural groups?
9. What were some of the formerly experimental devices which are

now in fairly common usage? Of those that are still considered experimental, which are more likely to become common?

10. How would you go about deciding whether a radio script was based on fiction or fact? What differences in approach and treatment would the decision elicit?
11. Why is the pattern of plot and action (i.e., introduction, rising action, crisis, climax, and denouement) sometimes different in radio drama than in other media? Trace that pattern in several different dramatic radio shows. How do the shows differ from each other? What points do they have in common?
12. Each of the three principles of development (plot, episodic, and episodic plot) is effective in its own sphere and to its own use. To what particular use is each best fitted in the present-day pattern of radio drama?
13. Granted that radio drama is extremely flexible in the matter of changing location or time, some discretion should be used. What precautions should be taken to insure listener credulity and interest?
14. Compare the development of a play which is a unit in series with one which is a unit in a serial drama. What is the difference, for instance, in: patterns of action and climax, use of narration, style, mood, and so forth?
15. Discuss the documentary program and formulate a set of criteria for analyzing the documentary. Apply these formulas to two or three documentaries. Are they inclusive? May there be more than one type or style of documentary? What rhetorical elements are predominant? Emotional appeals? How was narration used?
16. Read or listen to an average "educational program." Discuss the show in terms of informational impact. What elements of entertainment could be added to obtain more impact or secure more listener acceptability?
17. Read or listen to an average "entertainment" program. Is it justified as merely entertainment? Should there be more "culture?"
18. Study a late Hooper, Nielsen, Pulse, or Whan report. Are shows which purport to aim to a general audience consistently in the higher brackets? Which ones seem to aim at a more specific audience, yet achieve high ratings, thus indicating strong and general appeal to secondary and peripheral audiences? What factors in these shows would account for this?

Chapter 6

1. What methods has the author used to fit *The Test* to the prescribed length? Can you see any underdeveloped features which could have been improved if more time were available?
2. Why are flashbacks used in this play? Could the story be told without the use of flashbacks? What is the relationship of the flashbacks to the style in which the story is told? Does the author try to show a difference between the customs of the 1920's and those of today?
3. Why is it necessary to consider such elements as plot, characters, and dialogue when we are determining the literary type of the play? If we approach the play as serious drama, will it be necessary to sacrifice elements that appeal to listeners whose tastes incline toward the "pure entertainment" type of play? Why or why not?
4. If Joey's and Jennie's parents had been rich, how would the story have been changed? What story elements are enhanced by the economic positions of the children's parents? Suppose that Jennie's parents had owned the hardware store, what then?
5. Compare the two types of scenes (present and past) in terms of mood and illusion. What part do these play in the style of production? How does the principle of selection enter into the realistic aspects of the play?
6. If *The Test* were being presented as a commercial show and it were necessary to break into it for a middle commercial, at which place in the script would you make the division? How would you lead into the last act?
7. How does the development of this play compare with, for instance, the popular mystery melodrama? What distinguishing characteristics of *The Test* lead us to the conclusion that it is developed along episodic-plot lines?
8. How is the predominant element of a play determined? Why is it important that we learn which elements of the play are predominant? Do you agree with the analysis given in Chapter 6 concerning the selection of the predominant elements? What different conclusions could be justified?
9. What qualities of the play make it suitable for general broadcast? Why could this play be appreciated on several different levels? To what group would it most appeal?

Chapter 7

1. In your opinion, which is the most important area of general conflict in *The Test*? Specific conflict? Justify your answers.
2. Why is it important to identify the protagonist and antagonist?
3. What are the inherent dangers in presenting *The Test* as a play about the personal conflict between Joey and Jennie?
4. What trait or traits do each of the characters in the past sequences of the play seem to have in common? How do these common traits affect the mood and spirit of the play? What effect upon the action do they impose?
5. What do Joseph and Janet have in common in the present sequences? How does the author use this common characteristic to balance that of the persons in the past sequences?
6. Is Joey an *average* boy? Do you think he possesses a strong artistic spark or not? Justify your answer.
7. What qualities in Jennie show that she is a product of parents who are quite diverse in character? How does the conflict between Mr. and Mrs. Rand affect Jennie's attitude toward Joey?
8. Why is it impossible to think of Joseph Pike as a tragic hero? What is the tragic irony of his life?
9. What is the parallel between Janet Wagschal and Joseph Pike?
10. What in Mrs. Rand's character causes Janet to say of her, "Poor Ma," and Joseph to add, "she was a frost-bitten one all right."
11. What is Mr. Rand's philosophy in life? What is his major purpose in the play?
12. What is the nature of the conflict between Mr. and Mrs. Pike?
13. Compare the triangular relationship between Joey, Mr. Pike, and Mrs. Pike; and Jennie, Mr. Rand, and Mrs. Rand. What parallels in these two triangular relationships make for unity in the play?
14. Can you think of characters in other plays, either stage or radio, who remind you of the Narrator? What qualities do they have in common? (For a starter, how about the Examiner in *Outward Bound*?)

Chapter 8

1. Why is it important that the radio actor or director should note his impressions of the play after first reading?

2. When the actor first starts looking at the play from the point of view of what contributions his character makes, what general questions should he ask? Discuss the importance of each of the questions.
3. Which method of approach to characterization—the subjective, objective, or combination—seems to work best with you?
4. Discuss the concept of a “two-in-one” character, i.e., the basic character and an individual. Why is such characterization particularly important in radio?
5. How do we go about discovering the details of character which are given in the play?
6. What is meant by “filling out the character”? Why is it often necessary? How does the actor go about it?
7. Why should the actor be careful not to use the end character as his starting character? Discuss progression of character from both the additive and subtractive approaches.
8. What do we mean by “motivation”?
9. Discuss the actor’s problem of becoming emotionally involved in the character.
10. What are some of the problems in radio acting which point up the need for understanding the use of techniques? Discuss each in its relative importance to the others.
11. How would the Perspective of the play or scene be related to the degree of illusion desired?

Chapter 9

1. How would you define a “stereotype” in radio drama? Over a period of time what effect on audience taste and discrimination would the excessive use of stereotypes foster? Do you see any evidence that critical standards have been lowered in the past few years?
2. In what ways do the following factors contribute to stereotyping: the emphasis on commercialism, the transientness of the medium, the diversity of the audience, the short length of the average dramatic show, the low price paid for scripts. Can you think of other factors which lead to stereotyped characterizations?
3. What part does previous listener experience play in the practice of stereotyping?
4. What dangers do you consider most important in the practice of indiscriminate use of stereotypes? Discuss from the point of view of the actor, the audience, the medium.

5. What is the difference between a stereotype and a simplified character? Which is the more desirable, generally speaking? How would the actor go about creating a simplified character, rather than a stereotype?

Chapter 10

1. Why is it so important that the radio actor be able to visualize the scene and his character? How does the actor go about putting himself into this picture?
2. How would you define the "mood" of a play? Is the over-all mood of a play consistent, or does it change slightly with different scenes? What is the relationship between the mood of the play as a whole and the moods of each character?
3. Discuss the associative aspect of memory in the listener. How is it formed, and what part does it play in the radio actor's attempts to guide the listener into the desired reaction?
4. Define "motivation" and "response." Why is an understanding of action and reaction important to the radio actor?
5. List some of your actions of the previous day. Try to remember just why you did what you did. Under each action list its mental and physical components. Does there seem to be an over-all pattern apparent?
6. What do we mean by "the selection of key actions" in the presentation of radio drama? Why is such selection desirable? What is accomplished by this practice?
7. Discuss the three major precepts incorporated in making actions understood and appreciated by the listener.
8. Why is the use of gestures and bodily movement so important in radio acting? Describe the use of muscular tension as a technique.

Chapter 11

(Note: the scenes listed in the table of contents are designed to illustrate many of the topics covered in Chapters 11 and 12. They should be used as exercise material by the reader whenever possible. The following questions are designed to implement the exercise material, not to take the place of it.)

1. On the basis of your own experience in radio, discuss the ways and means that the director, actors, and crew members can work together for a better and more finished show. How might a non-

- professional or student organization differ in their approach to the "production-team" concept from a commercial organization?
2. What other "actor attributes" can you add to the list presented on pages 208-210? Discuss the reasons for your choices.
3. What is meant by "flexible characterizations"? Why is flexibility in acting so important to the radio actor?
4. Generally speaking, what is the nature and function of the narrator in a radio play? What do we mean by narration in the first, second, or third persons? Which is the most common? What is "split narration"? Why is it used? What are the advantages in using a "commercial narrator"?
5. Define a "montage," from the point of view of radio drama. Why, or for what purpose, is it generally used? What particular problems are often encountered by the actor in playing it?
6. Compare radio diction with stage diction and ordinary conversation.
7. What are the best ways of acquiring skill in the use of dialects? What are some of the cautions which must be employed in using them?
8. Describe the nature and use of the following distortion devices: filters, echo chambers, dead booths, gobos. How may mike position be used as a method for distorting the voice?
9. Why is it necessary that the actor train himself to be immediately responsive to studio sign language? Test yourself on your ability to understand the following signals: give me a level, stand by, go ahead, move closer to the mike, move farther away from the mike, speak into the beam of the mike, go faster, go slower, use more volume, use less volume, give with more feeling or intensity, use less intensity or feeling (tone it down), watch me for cue (or watch me more closely), you're doing OK, cut, play it all.
10. What mechanical details can the actor attend to when he first receives his script (in addition to study and analysis)?
11. What is a level? balance? What is the difference between volume and loudness? In what ways may balance be achieved and maintained? How can the actor help?
12. What is the difference between cross-mike work and off-beam work? What circumstances generally call for these particular techniques?
13. In what position should an actor hold his script? What advantages does he gain by holding his script correctly? What precautions

should an actor take to keep from losing or mislaying his script during rehearsal?

14. What is "blasting"? What precautions should be taken by the actor to insure against his blasting of the mike?
15. Discuss the use of volume and intensity as methods of emphasis.
16. In what four ways are fades used? Give examples of each use. What is a quick fade? a slow fade? a normal fade? a live fade? a studio fade? a board fade?
17. Discuss the combination of factors which make up microphone perspective.

Chapter 12

1. What is meant by the "give and take" of dialogue?
2. How does the actor go about maintaining the "illusion of the first time"?
3. What is meant by "normally dramatic atmosphere"? Discuss the use of vocal emphasis as an extension of the drama in the play. What methods of emphasis are the most important? Why?
4. Contrast topping lines and throwaway lines. What purpose does each type play in performance?
5. Why should underplaying, as a technique, be used cautiously by the beginner?
6. At what point in rehearsal should the characterization be crystallized? Why is it necessary that this crystallization take place before the dress rehearsal?
7. What precautions should an actor take in marking his script? In line directions? In marking cuts and additions?
8. Discuss the integration of dialogue with sound or music. How may the actor insure a correct internal timing in an integrated portion of dialogue?
9. How may speedups and slowdowns be accomplished without being noticeable to the listener?
10. What are the obligations of the actor in regard to the notation of directions and script cuts? Discuss the process of cuts as a means of correct timing. What are preliminary cuts? tentative cuts? probable cuts? possible cuts? line cuts? page cuts? inserts? revised pages? permanent cuts?

11. Discuss the transition as a method of bridging between one sequence and another. Why should the transitions be unnoticed by the listener? In most transitions, what should the actor do in leading in and, particularly, out of them? What specific problems are created in transitions by change in Perspective?
12. In projecting the illusion of physical action, what are the most important problems the actor has to face? How do physical actions affect the voice? How can the actor best give the illusion that he is going through the action?
13. What particular problems are created in matters of projection such as calling, screaming, whispering, laughing, crying, speaking through closed doors, etc.? By what techniques are the mechanical aspects of the problem met?
14. In what way does the use of the cross-fade often enhance the dramatic value of a script? What methods or techniques are used by the actor in achieving cross-fades?
15. Crowd scenes are generally difficult to make natural and believable. How can the actor help?



A bibliography on radio drama

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SECTION I. Articles of Interest to the Student of Radio Drama.

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